The "Shiᶜi peasant" and the Colonel:
Inventing the modern Shiᶜa sect under the mandate



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اهداء الى روحي المرحومين المرّبي الفاضل حبيب محمود يونس والحاجة هيام مصطفي الزين، الرحمة لروحيهما.

Dedicated to my dear grandparents, Habib Mahmoud Younes (07/15/1934-05/19/2021) and Hiyam Mustafa Al-Zayn (10/28/1941-05/11/2021). Your presence would have meant the world to me.

عندما بدأت بكتابة هذا العمل لم اتصورْ أنني كنت سأقرأ اسماء معظم بلدات الجنوب مرتين كل يوم، مرة في أرشيف المنتدِب وهي تُحرَق وتجري منها الدموع، والمرة الاخرى في عاجل الأخبار وهي تُحرَق وتجري منها الدماء.
من اجل قرى ومدن الجنوب التي تضرّرت من جرّاء القصف الإسرائيلي المستمر منذ ٨ تشرين الأوّل ٢٠٢٣: شبعا، ميس الجبل، محيبيب، بليدة، الخيام، يارون، حنين، خربة سلم، كونين، جبل صافي، مارون الرأس، المجادل، مجدل زون، تبنين، لبونة، ياطر، قليعة، عيتا الشعب، الما الشعب، عيناتا، حداثا، البازورية، القوزح، بنت جبيل، كفر كيلا، الناقورة، رب الثلاثين، الظهيرة، العديسة، زبقين، النبطية، الحوله، عيترون، رميش، حافور، الصويري، صيدا، جدرة، الهبّارية، كفر شوبه، جبل بلاط، راميه، حومين، رومين، مرجعيون، تل النحاس، تل العوضة، حلته، مزرعة السلامية وبيت ليف.
رحم الله جميع الأرواح التي فنت.

When I started writing this thesis, I certainly did not expect to read the names of most towns from South Lebanon twice every single day, the first time in mandate archives where they were mentioned amid scorching fires and rivers of tears, and the other time on the news, amid scorching fires again, and rivers of blood.
For the villages and cities of the South that were affected by the Israeli aggression on South Lebanon starting from October 8th, 2023: Sheb^{c}a, Mays Al-Jabal, Muhaybīb, Blīda, Al-Khyam, Yaroun, Hounine, Khirbet Selem, Kounine, Jabal Safi, Maroun Al-Ras, Al-Majadel, Majdal Zoun, Tibnin, Laboune, Yater, Qulay^{c}a, ^{c}Aita Al-Sha^{c}b, Alma Al-Sha^{c}b, ^{c}Aynata, Haddata, Al-Bazouriyya, Al-Qawzah, Bint Jubayl, Kafar Kela, Al-Naqoura, Rib Al-Thalatheen, Al-Dhuhayra, Al-^{c}Odaisseh, Zibqine, Al-Nabatiyeh, Al-Houla, ^{c}Aitaroun, Rmeish, Hafour, Al-Souairi, Saida, Jedre, Al-Habbariyye, Kafar Shouba, Jabal Blat, Ramiyeh, Houmine, Roumine, Marje^{c}youn, Tal Al-Nhass, Tal Al-^{c}Awdah, Halta, Mazra^{c}at Al-Salamiyyeh and Beit Līf.
May God show mercy on the souls that left us.

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Acknowledgements

When I think about this senior thesis, I like to remind myself of the coincidental way in which, on my way back from office hours with Professor Zeynep Çelik, I overheard the words "archival research" from a conversation happening in the graduate student lounge in Fayerweather Hall. The conference turned out to be the annual information session organized by the Columbia History Association about senior theses, which, a year later, I attended as a guest speaker.

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This work would not have been possible without the unwavering support of the amazing friends I have made along my journey in the dual degree with Sciences Po, and especially the close friendship I have developed with Mohammad Faryssy, who generously offered to share his linguistic expertise and help me with translations from Arabic to English.

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Notes on transliteration and translation

The transliteration of Arabic nouns and names of places and people follows roughly Adam Gacek’s method from the guidebook *Arabic Manuscripts. A Vademecum for Readers.* The letter ع is marked as ^{c} and the glottal stop (*hamza*) is marked as ‘. However, in most cases, elongated vowels (ا، و، ي), emphatic letters, along with the letter ح, are not marked by the dot of certain transliterations of Arabic. Confusions between the transliteration of ده and the transliteration of ذ are avoided by a dash, such as in *Ad-ham Khanjar*. Because of their common romanizations, some words - mainly names of places - are transliterated based on how they are pronounced in the Lebanese dialect rather than their standardized form in Modern Standard Arabic. Examples of such cases would be *Jabal* ^{c}*Amel* instead of *Jabal* ^{c}*Amil*, and ^{c}*Ayn Ebel* instead of ^{c}*Ayn Ibil*. Other words - mainly names of people - kept their French romanized equivalent, such as *Youssef Bek Al-Zayn* instead of *Yusuf Bek Al-Zayn*, because of how widespread the French writing of those names is nowadays in Lebanon. I should equally explain that the alternance between the words *Shi*^{c}*i* and *Shi*^{c}*a* is due to the function of the word in Arabic as an adjective (*na*^{c}*t*) or as a strict noun complement *(ism idafa*). Semantically, the grammatical change does not affect the reader’s understanding.

Finally, French spelling of French words is kept unmodified.

Translations of all primary sources and some secondary sources into English are made manually by the author.

Introduction

ايها الشرقُ افقْ منْ سكرةٍ   جعلتْ يقظةَ علياكَ منامًا
وانتشطها عزمةً ترقى بها   في العلى الغاربِ منهُ والسناما
لستُ أدري والليالي غرّةٌ   أعمى نالكَ امْ رحتَ تعامى
فسأبكيكَ بكىَ ثاكلةٍ   بدموع تخجلُ السيلِ الركاما
صرتَ بعدَ العزِّ في ذلِّ الاما   ووراءَ بعدَ ما كنتَ أماما

علي شمس الدين، (الشرق والغرب) [1]

O East, wake up from a stupor
That rendered your vigilance a dream

And was activated by a determination
That raise your status which you have forsaken

I do not know and the nights remain young,
Has your destiny blinded you or are you playing the blind?

I'll cry for you like a bereaved
With tears too shy to overflow

You've fallen into shame after your glory,
And went behind after you have pranced in the front.

ᶜAli Shams El-Din, "The East and the West"[2]

The end of the long 19th Century came with the advent of the unprecedented chaos that was World War I. The level of violence that developed in the Great War instigated a process of questioning identities, to the extent that Europe's imperialism itself was put under question.[3] WWI trauma oozed over most of the globe, and the Levant, as a former part of the Ottoman Empire, had

[1] *Al-ᶜIrfan*, vol. 27 (1937), 353.
[2] The poem was only published in *Al-ᶜIrfan* and was never translated. The provided translation is manual.
[3] W. E. B. Dubois, "The Negro Mind Reaches Out" in *The New Negro*, ed. Alain Locke (1925), 402.

known its own forms of psychological and social damage from the 1914-1918 war.[4] The Arab provinces of the Empire, though, fell under a double condemnation: the collapse of five centuries of rule, and the advent of a new, colonial rule whereby Ottoman citizens abruptly became colonial subjects.[5] For the Shiᶜi community residing in the *Beirut Vilayet*, brutal colonial rule engaged with the direct transformation of their identity, insofar as they had not been in much contact with the French power before 1918, unlike their Druze and Christian counterparts.

On October 7th, 1918, French troupes led by admiral Varney entered Beirut, expelled Ottoman administrators, and prepared the Grand Serail for the arrival of François Georges-Picot, as the first High Commissioner of the French Republic in Syria.[6] This event symbolized the beginning of 28 years of French mandate in Lebanon, characterized by the establishment of a French administration and military corps, the creation of a Lebanese Republic and its sectarian political regime, as well as the culmination of the *mission civilisatrice* in the Arab world.

With support from Beirut-based Christian notables, the mandate administration worked on inventing the Lebanese society, grouping eighteen religious communities under one state and governing them through sectarian law. Confessional groups – or *millet* – previously governed by the Ottoman imperial rule of *dhimmi* found themselves under the control of a highly centralized state that perceived, treated and expected them as 'sects' (i.e. sectarian groups, or *ta'ifa* in Arabic).[7]

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[4] WWI trauma in Lebanon was mainly linked to the Mount-Lebanon famine. For more on this topic, see: Tylor Brand, Famine Worlds. Life at the edge of suffering in Lebanon's Great War (Stanford University Press, 2023).
[5] The discussion on whether Ottoman governance in the Levant could be considered a form of colonial rule is outside the scope of this paper. I borrow the dichotomy between Ottoman citizen and colonial subjects from contemporary writers themselves, who used the terminology of "muntadib" (mandate authority, colonizer) and the "ifranjiy" (foreigner) exclusively when referring to the French. ᶜAmili Shiᶜi writers designated Ottoman rule as "al-hikm al-ᶜuthmani" (literally: Ottoman governance).
[6] François Boustani, *Liban: Genèse d'une Nation Singulière* (Encre d'Orient. Paris: ErickBonnier, 2020), 211.
[7] The *dhimmi* system is a system defined by Shariᶜah law on how the people of the book (Christians and Jewish people) should be treated legally in an Islamic state. It involves civil and penal fields of law mainly. For more on the dhimmi system, see: Barkey, "Aspects of Legal Pluralism in the Ottoman Empire," in *Legal Pluralism and Empires*, eds. J. Ross and L. Benton (New York: NYU Press, 2013), 83-104, and Fattal, "How Dhimmis Were Judged in the Islamic World," in *Muslims and Others in Islamic Societies*, ed. R. Hoyland (London: Routledge, 2021) 83 -102.

A sectarian group differed from a religious group in that the religious identification became prime to other types of identification, blurring the line between the political and the religious identities.[8] During the mandate, the Shi^{c}a, one of the largest groups in Lebanon and majorly concentrated in its South (i.e. Jabal ^{c}Amel[9]), went through their first process of sectarianization[10], turning from what was known as the Ottoman Metwali community into the Lebanese Shi^{c}a bloc.

My research examines the process of sectarianization of ^{c}Amili Shi^{c}is during the French mandate. However, instead of dealing with how sectarian laws – such as the law of personal status (1936) and the judicial system of the Ja^{c}fari court (1926)[11] – have contributed to a top-down process of sectarianization, this work focalizes on how the Shi^{c}a gradually became sectarian as a result of the French presence and its social implications. In other words, this research explains the way and the extent to which French presence and administrative control pushed ^{c}Amili Shi^{c}is to fold onto their own religious community and develop a sectarian identity. The main intervention of this study is to divert colonial studies' focus from the exclusive importance of law in colonizing, and to open a space for an academic discussion on the less institutional interactions between colonial officers and the colonized; in this case, that would correspond to the interactions between French direct administrators and Southern Shi^{c}a, as well as the latter's reactions to colonial policies. Instances of negotiation, resistance, engagement with colonial modernization, and cooperation

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[8] A thorough discussion on sectarian vs. confessional group is provided on page 13.

[9] A map of Jabal ^{c}Amel is provided at the beginning of the next section. Jabal ^{c}Amel represents the three *caza* (governorates) of South I (caza of Saida), South II (caza of Marje^{c}youn/Nabatiyeh) and South III (caza of Sour). Although Shi^{c}i presence was not as restricted, the geographical scope of this research will be limited to the region known as Jabal ^{c}Amel, as it is composed of the three majorly Shi^{c}a caza. The other spaces Shicas dominated, namely Baalbek and Beirut's southern suburbs, were peripheral to the history of the Shi^{c}a community under the mandate. While Beirut became the capital and Baalbek rapidly grew into the touristic center of modern Lebanon, Jabal ^{c}Amel remained "the intellectual, scholarly, and political center of gravity of the Shi^{c}i community in Greater Lebanon". It was neither part of the natural nor historical borders that the French mandate claimed to restore, a factor that played an undeniable role in shaping French discourse vis-à-vis the South.

[10] Max Weiss, *In the Shadow of Sectarianism: Law, Shi'ism, and the Making of Modern Lebanon* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 8.

[11] Personal status law mainly refers to civil law, mostly family law, the only field of law that retained certain aspects of Shari^{c}ah law in post-Ottoman societies. The Ja^{c}fari court - the formal name for the Shi^{c}i court - dealt with Personal status law. This discussion occupies the main topic of chapter 3.

with the mandate administration are of crucial relevance to this study. This does not imply a bottom-up process of sectarianization; it more specifically foreshadows a non-institutional and less unidimensional level of top-down sectarianization and challenges the idea that legal institutions operated as infallible sectarianizing machines to which colonial subjects complied passively.

This thesis' argument is to revisit previous iterations of how Shi^{c}i became sectarian during the mandate period. I argue that selective colonial politics of violence, resource extraction and neglect towards South Lebanon actively created a Shi^{c}i sectarian identity amid the Lebanese mosaic of sects. The argument develops on evidence from the 1918-1920 moment of sectarian violence, the 1920s-30s colonial pauperization, and the case study of the Ja^{c}fari court's establishment.

The Shi^{c}a and Jabal ^{c}Amel

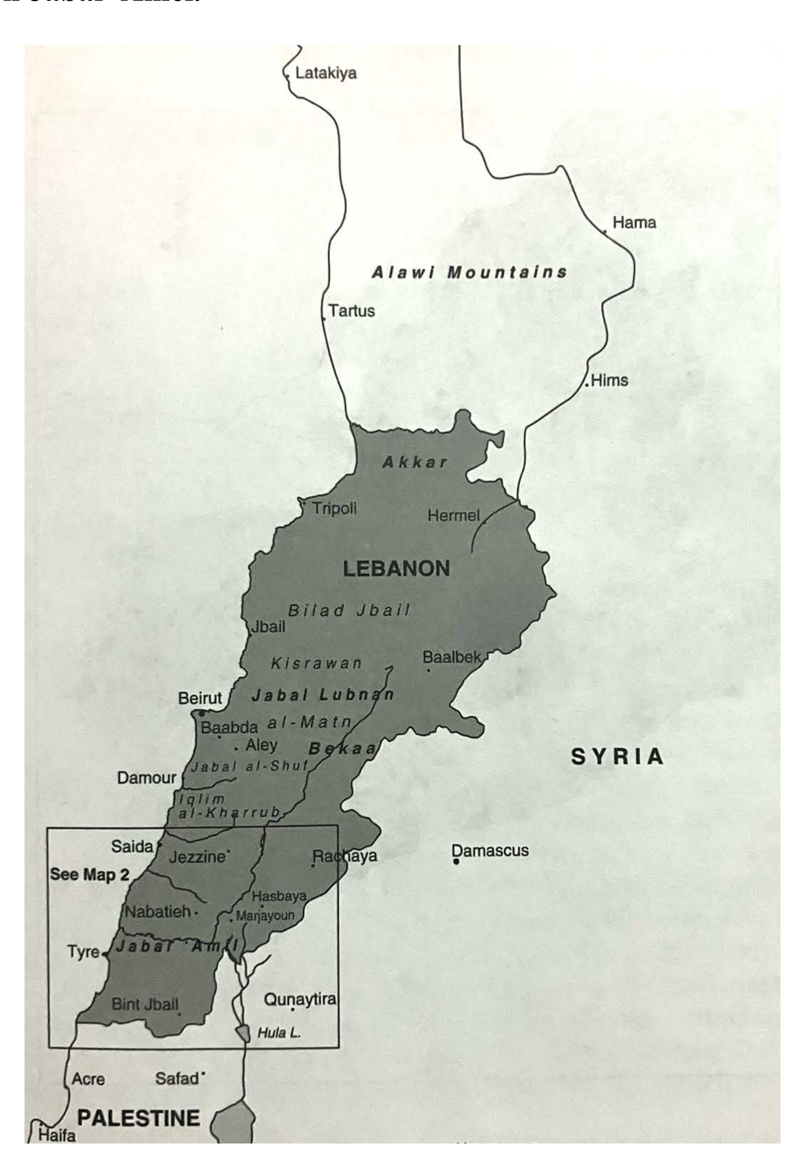
Historical Jabal ^{c}Amel extended from upper Galilea to the cities of Saida (Sidon) and Jezzine, comprising the cities of Sour (Tyre), Bint Jbeil, Nabatiyeh and Marje^{c}youn, and bordered on the East by Jabal El-Druze and more generally the Hauran region (currently in Syria).[12]

The ^{c}Amilis' concern for their own history is ancient. Originally dwelling in the hinterland, a hardly accessible chain of mountain, and surrounded by groups that do not share their confession – even oppose and persecute it – ^{c}Amili Shi^{c}is endeavored to integrate existing historical narratives as building their own appeared to be a difficult task. When the Safavid Sufi dynasty took over the Persian Empire, ^{c}Amili religious thinkers were called upon to help in the Safavid effort to make Shi^{c}i Persia.[13] ^{c}Amili historians sought to put Jabal ^{c}Amel on the map of Shi^{c}i historical narratives

[12] With the drawing of Lebanon's borders in September 1920, the utmost southern villages of Jabal ^{c}Amel fell under British rule in Palestine, identifying more to the denomination of upper Galilea than the historical Jabal ^{c}Amel.
[13] Stefan Winter, *The Shiites of Lebanon under Ottoman Rule, 1516-1788* (Cambridge Studies in Islamic Civilization. Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 20-24.

through biographical narratives tracing genealogies of religious thinkers developing in the region; the term *al-ᶜAmilī* (from Jabal ᶜAmel) reverberated in the Safavid court.[14]

FIGURE 2:[15] Map of modern-day Lebanon (identical borders to Greater Lebanon), with a focus on Jabal ᶜAmel. [16]

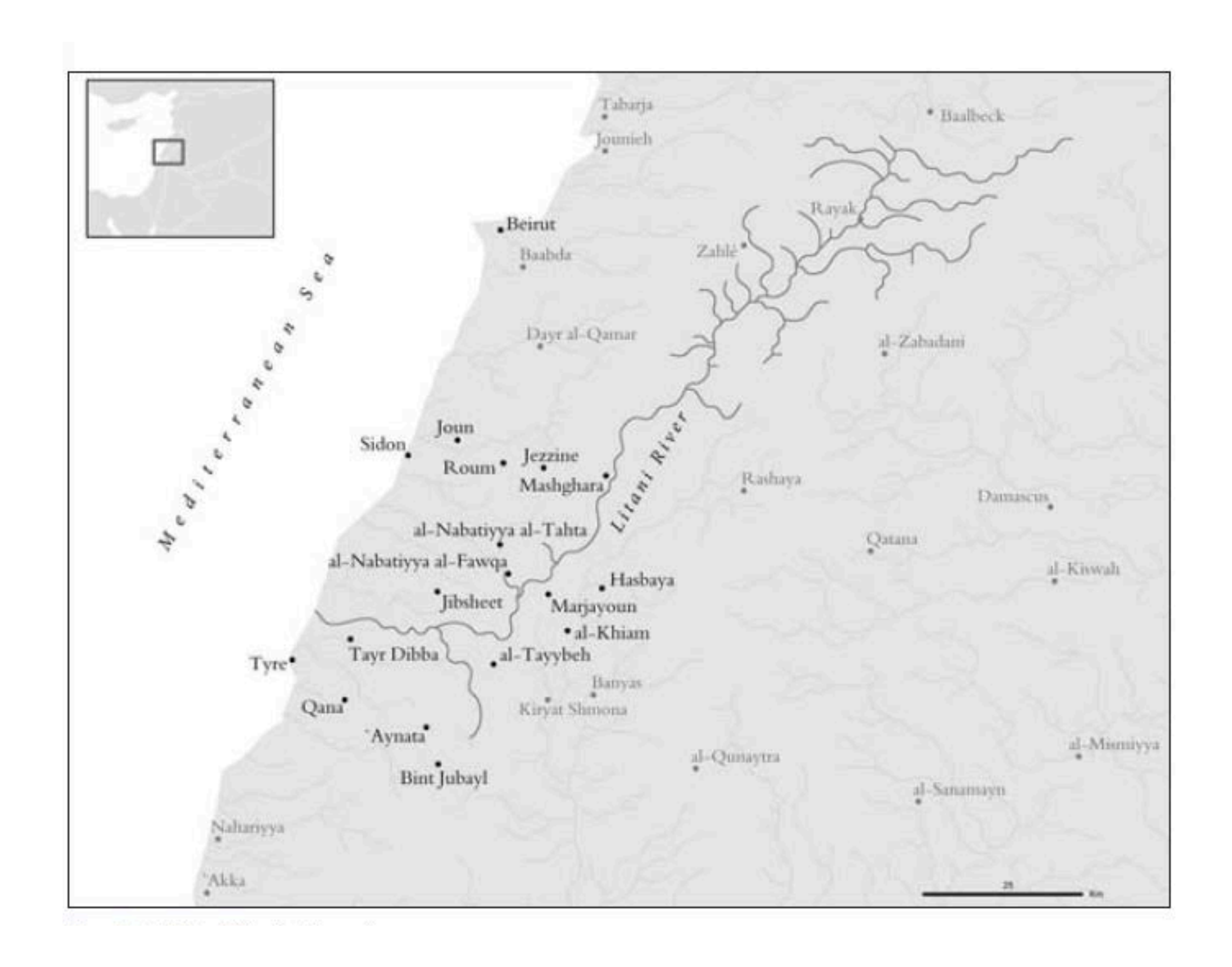


[14] Al-Hurr Al-Amili, *Amal al-Āmil* (Madrasa-yi Namāzī-yi Khūy 264), 306-309. For more on biographical dictionaries, see: Hanaoka, Mimi. *Authority and Identity in Medieval Islamic Historiography: Persian Histories from the Peripheries*. Cambridge Studies in Islamic Civilization. United Kingdom ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016.

[15] I consider FIGURE 1 to be the photograph on the front page of the thesis. FIGURE 1 was taken from ʻAlī Ḥusayn Mazraʻānī's *al-Nabaṭīyah fī al-dhākirah : 1860-1999 M : ṣuwar wa-wathā'iq : 900 ṣūrah wa-wathīqah* (Bayrūt : ʻA.Ḥ. Mazraʻānī, 1999), 64. The photographer's identity is not revealed.

[16] Tamara Chalabi, *The Shi'is of Jabal 'Amil and the New Lebanon: Community and Nation Sate, 1918-1943* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), ix.

FIGURE 3: Map of Jabal ᶜAmel.[17]



[17] Max Weiss, *In the Shadow of Sectarianism: Law, Shi'ism, and the Making of Modern Lebanon* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010).

Jabal ^{c}Amel's main population is said to descend from *Banu ^{c}Amil* – to whom it owes its name – a Yemeni tribe led by "^{c}Amila Ben Saba'", from the town of Saba', who moved to the Levantine coast after a deluge that closed the canal of Ma'rab in around 300 BC. ^{c}Amili historians consider *Banu ^{c}Amil*'s migration as the start of ^{c}Amili history, naturally induced by the name. The next phase in Jabal ^{c}Amel's history begins in 1516, with the Ottoman conquest of the Levant.[18]

However, Shi^{c}ism in Jabal ^{c}Amel predates the Ottoman period by centuries. Shi^{c}ism is a confessional group of Islam, considered heterodox in that they differ from Muslim Orthodoxy, Sunnism. While orthodoxy considers that the Prophet Muhammad designated his *sahaba* (Arabic for companion) Abu-Bakr Al-Siddiq as the next rightful *caliph* (Islamic ruler), Shi^{c}is – also given the name *Shi^{c}at ^{c}Ali* (the followers of ^{c}Ali) – consider that in a day they call *yawm al-ghadir* ('the day of the covenant'), Prophet Muhammad appointed Imam ^{c}Ali Ibn Abi-Talib, the husband of his daughter Fatimat-ul-Zahra', as his successor as *Amir Al-Mu'minin* ('The Prince of all Faithful'). Twelver Shi^{c}is further believe in the *^{c}isma* ('infallibility') of the twelve Imams, who descend from Imam ^{c}Ali Ibn Abi-Talib: himself, his sons Imam Hassan and Imam Hussein, and nine Imams from the lineage of Imam Hussein. In Twelver Shi^{c}i beliefs, the last Imam, Imam Mahdi, *Sahib al-^{c}Asr wa-al-Zaman* ('Master of Eras and Time'), has gone into occultation and intends on coming out again to announce the end of times. Twelver Shi^{c}is only represent one branch of Shi^{c}ism, examples of other branches being Isma^{c}ilis and Zaydis. Twelver Shi^{c}is also remember with strong sorrow the ten days of *^{c}Ashoura'*, which end with *ma^{c}rakat Karabala'* ('the battle of Karbala'), ten days during which what remained of the family of Imam ^{c}Ali were under siege and deprived of water in Karbala, current Iraq. The battle of the 10th day occurred on the 10th of October of 680 and opposed Imam Hussein against the second Umayyad Caliph Yazid. The battle ended with the

[18] Muhammad Jabir Al Safa, *Tarikh Jabal Amel* (Dar Matn Al-Lugha: Beirut, 1981), 29.

harrowing scene of the Imam Hussein's death, a date (10th of Muharram in Hijri Calendar) mourned by Twelver Shi^{c}is until today.

First developing under Isma^{c}ili Fatimid rule, Twelver Shi^{c}ism spread not by repeopling but by conversions, especially when the Buyid Twelver Shi^{c}i state expanded in what is today Iran in the 10th C. This seems to be the major factor for the spread of Shi^{c}ism in Greater Syria.[19] ^{c}Amili Shi^{c}is thus underwent the strict persecution of Shi^{c}ism under Ayyubid rule. The next major periodization in ^{c}Amili history, as mentioned previously, is the early 16th C. and Ottoman rule, but the period is not as much remembered (or historicized; "تأريخ") for the change in dynasty than for the change in the organization of agriculture.[21] The *muqata^{c}ji* (in Turkish, *mukataci*) system, also known as the *iqta^{c}* agricultural system, characterized Ottoman governance in Jabal ^{c}Amel, and brought about both a level of autonomy for landowners and an oppression regime against subordinate peasants. The *iqta^{c}* system imposed heavy taxes, determined by both the landowner and the Ottoman administrator, which marked the concerns of Shi^{c}i peasants according to ^{c}Amili Shi^{c}i historiography. Indeed, ^{c}Amili land comprised mainly of rural spaces, at the exception of the Mediterranean coast decorated by the beautiful urban ports of Sour and Saida.[22] The *muqata^{c}ji* system ended in 1865 according to ^{c}Amili historical narratives, but pragmatically, the powerful landowners called *multazim*s retained unchallenged social and nearly political power in the region, until the establishment in 1884 of the French *Régie du Tabac*.[23] The 1865-1918 period is identified

[19] Indeed, apart from Jabal ^{c}Amel, Shi^{c}i communities developed in Tartous, Damascus and around Baalbek as well, but they remain out of the scope of this research. That the Shi^{c}a were not in contact with other confessions is an incorrect assumption. Jabal ^{c}Amil never was an exclusively Shi^{c}i region. Sunni presence inhabited the region prior to Shi^{c}ism, and, with the advent of the Ottomans, most ^{c}Amili Sunnis concentrated in the port city of Saida. Moreover, in addition to building neighborhoods for their *millet* in the major cities of Saida, Sour and Nabatiyeh, Christians, both Maronites and Greek Orthodox, spread across the rural hinterland as well, like their Druze counterparts in the Hasbaya and Marje^{c}youn areas, closer to the current Syrian border. Although Jabal ^{c}Amel was predominantly Shi^{c}i, it remained a mosaic of multiconfessional villages: confessional groups were not compartmented in the region, rather they cohabitated, interacted, and shared urban compounds and, in certain cases such as in Zawtar El-Sharqiyah, villages.

[21] Al Safa, *Tarikh*, 30.

[22] Even urban spaces in the hinterland, such as Bint Jubayl, Nabatiyeh and Marje^{c}youn were fairly limited in area and surrounded with arable lands organized in villages.

[23] The history of the *Régie du Tabac* is detailed in Chapter 2.

as the moment ^{c}Amilis felt the presence of Ottoman administration the most, with the *Tanzimat* reforms[24], the emergence of Arab nationalism, and the centralization of tobacco farming, the main agricultural activity in the hinterland.

According to local historians, the Ottoman period represented a constitutive moment in ^{c}Amili Shi^{c}i history. The collapse of the Ottoman Empire was dramatically narrated in several newspapers, journals, history books, and in the early 20th C. effort of documenting the history of Jabal ^{c}Amel. Muhammad Jaber Āl Safa, who lived through WWI and the mandate, dedicated in his two-page introduction for centuries of historicization an entire paragraph on the end of the Ottoman dynasty:

> "And in this period, the Turks ruled Jabal ^{c}Amel directly for 55 years until the year in which the Great War ended, and thus the Ottoman era faded, and all of Syria slipped away from the Turks' rule just as has slipped the other territories from different corners, and thus collapsed the throne of the *Othman* dynasty, and their state vanished, after they had upended large nations, knocked down thrones and flipped crowns over. They ruled over half of the world for about six centuries and their rule started from 699/1299 and remained until 1339/1920 and the number of their kings was of 37 caliphs and sultans, the first being Othman I and the last of them being Abudl-Mecid II, son of Abdel-Aziz I."[25]

Colonial influence in the Levant and sectarianism

In the late 18th Century, Comte de Volney, a French writer and self-proclaimed archeologist, visited Greater Syria for ethnological purposes, and wrote in his account on Baalbek's Roman ruins about mountains as the seed of freedom and civilization. This illustrated one of the first instances of French *mission civilisatrice* in the Levant whereby the Enlightenment-inspired assumption that those who dwell in the mountains were endowed with purity traveled from the

[24] The *tanzimat* (from Arabic: re-organizations) reforms consist in a series of 19th C. modernization policies led by the Ottoman executive mainly to centralize the Empire and modernize its economy. In many ways, the *tanzimat* are perceived as a way for the Ottoman Empire to survive through the century's transformations and external pressure. On the *tanzimat*, see: Zeynep Çelik, *Empire, Architecture, and the City: French-Ottoman Encounters, 1830-1914*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008).
[25] Al Safa, *Tarikh*, 30.

French metropole and found application in to-be-colonized territories. De Volney concluded that, because the mountains sheltered the communities that sought to protect themselves from Ottoman 'tyranny' ("*despotisme*")[26], Maronite groups of Mount-Lebanon were more compatible with the Enlightenment's definition of freedom ("*liberté*"). As far back as 1778, De Volney had already called for the establishment of a French state in the druzo-maronite cell to protect '*les Chrétiens d'Orient*' menaced by their Druze compatriots and the surrounding Muslim authoritarianism[27]. On the one hand, Volney's publication has the merit of showing the very dividing and sectarian nature of French imperialism around the Mediterranean, while on the other hand, foreshadowing the differential attitude of French ethnographies of Christian and non-Christian groups. Indeed, a few kilometers south of Mount Lebanon lies the Shi^{c}a-inhabited mountainous region of Jabal ^{c}Amel[28] to which Volney does not refer to at all.

One naturally questions the motives for De Volney's dismissal of the Shi^{c}a mountains as a mature enough embryo for civilization, but the French's strategic relationship with Maronites, and Levantine Christians in general, sought to reach specific political and economic ends that could not be established through the Shi^{c}a. Lebanese historian Ibrahim Tabet traces French-Maronites relations to the Crusades (XIth C.), followed by the major shift in the institutionalization and Latinization of the Maronite Church in 1736, endorsed by French diplomatic relations with the Ottoman Empire.[29] Starting from 1789, missionary *collèges* started to spread across the Mount-Lebanon region, in ^{c}Ayn Warqa first, then in Beirut with the arrival of the Jesuits in 1831.[30] The

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[26] Comte de Volney, *Voyage en Syrie et en Égypte pendant les années 1783, 1784 et 1785. Volume 1* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 56.
[27] Usama Makdisi, "The "Rediscovery" of Baalbek: a metaphor for empire in the nineteenth century", in *Scramble for the Past. A Story of Archaeology in the Ottoman Empire, 1753–1914* . Edited by Zainab Bahrani, Zeynep Çelik, and Edhem Eldem (Istanbul: SALT, 2011), 128**.**
[28] *Jabal* means Mount.
[29] Ibrahim Tabet, *La France au Liban et au Proche-Orient: du XIe au XXIe siècle ; essai historique* (Paris: Éd. de la Revue Phénicienne, 2013), 18.
[30] Boustani, *Liban*, 431.

19th Century saw an unprecedented French involvement in the Lebanese mountains, culminating in June 8th, 1861, when Napoléon III pressured Ottoman authorities to grant autonomy to Mount-Lebanon, thus creating *mutasarrifiyyet Jabal-Lubnan*. The *mutasarrifiyye* functioned like a proto-French colony insofar as its economy was subordinated to French silk trade between Chouf and Lyon.[31]

The importance of the 1820-1861 period cannot be exaggerated when dealing with sectarianism and its historiography. Delineation of the numerous events that occurred in these forty years have been the subject of most works of Lebanese historians writing on the 19th C. In *The Culture of Sectarianism*, Usama Makdisi provides us with a thorough rundown of the social dynamics and political occurrences that shook Mount-Lebanon and amounted to the *mutasarrifiyye*, but his piece is less narrative than analytic, with a focus on sectarianism. The series of violence starting in the 1830s and extending over the 1860s is perceived by most historians as the moment where sectarianism started to ferment in the Lebanese area, and the context of formation of the Druze and the Maronite *sects*.[32]

Sectarianism as a social phenomenon supersedes the geographically narrow scope of Lebanon but there are two specificities to the nature of sectarianism in the Middle East and North Africa: French imperialism and Ottoman ethno-religious diversity, which make it difficult and less relevant to involve comparisons with the way sectarianism developed elsewhere. The definitions of sectarianism this project aligns with the most are mainly inspired by the works of Usama Makdisi and Max Weiss. Makdisi qualified religion as a site of "colonial encounter"[33], which is more compatible with the Maronite case than in the case of the Shiᶜa. His definition of sectarianism

[31] Charles El-Hayek, '"How, Then, Did You Try to Rebel?"', (Slow Factory). Accessed 23 December 2023. https://slowfactory.earth/readings/how-then-did-you-try-to-rebel-19th-century-mount-lebanon/.
[32] Ussama Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2000), 118-124.
[33] Ibid, 3.

slightly seeks to mitigate from the major historiographical breakthrough brought about by Partha Chatterjee and Gyanendra Pandey, who consider sectarianism – among other dynamics such as nationalism and communalism – as a "form of colonialist knowledge"[34]. Makdisi, on the other hand, considers that "sectarianism is a modernist knowledge in the sense that it was produced in the context of European hegemony and Ottoman reforms and because its articulators at a colonial (European), imperial (Ottoman), and local (Lebanese) level regarded themselves as moderns who used the historical past to justify present claims and future development"[35]. In the case of the mandate period, colonial and imperial converge, because the colonial rules as the larger imperial entity. In 1918 – one can argue even before – the blue zone of the Sykes-Picot agreement became part of the French Empire. The local (Lebanese) level in articulating sectarianism was well present during the mandate; colonized subjects knew of sectarianism, especially after news of the 1860s event had echoed across the Ottoman Empire. Both the colonizer and the colonized were agents in creating sects, however not balanced agents. Subsequently, what this research borrows from Weiss is the concept of "sectarianization", referring to "gradual processes of transformation within the Shiᶜi milieu in French mandate Lebanon"[36]. Weiss writes in the same dynamic as Makdisi, pushing forward the notion that communities are not inherently sectarian, rather they become sectarian as a result of identity-related transformations. Consequently, exhibiting sectarian behavior becomes our metric to determine whether – and upon what transformation – a community has become sectarian. For the purpose of semantic clarity, it is important to note that *sectarianization* designates the processes by which a confessional group, i.e. a group belonging to a specific religious branch or *confession*, develops *sectarian* behaviors, thus allowing to identifying the

[34] Ibid, 7.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Weiss, *Shadow*, 4.

formation for a *sect*. It is equally relevant to note that, in the context of semantic usage in Lebanese historiography, the Arabic terminology for both sect and confession are identical (: *ta'ifa*, written طائفة), because the historiographical discussion on either sectarian or confessional communities emerged in a period where sects already existed. The case of ^{c}Amili Shi^{c}is remained particular because of the common usage of the particular terminology of *Metwalli* (pl. *Matawila*)[37] which will be discussed more in detail in the first chapter. The mandate period - it is important to note - marked the start of the Shi^{c}a's sectarianization process. This does not imply that violence between the Shi^{c}a and other groups did not exist; rather it makes a rigid distinction between violence opposing sects and violence of sectarian motive. Naturally, in Jabal ^{c}Amel, the latter developed during the mandate period, as this marks the time of the production of a sect and of its *conscience de secte*.

What does it mean, then, to be sectarian? As per methodology, the expression of sectarian identities and the action of sectarian behaviors will be measured in terms of identifications and loyalties. Is considered a sect a group defined by its religious identification whose members express prior loyalty to such identification over other types of identifications and affinities based on class, nationality, ethnicity, gender, or simply geographic neighborhood. Thus, sectarian behavior consists in a behavior that derives from such loyalties. They can include violence, as emphasized by Makdisi, or diverse alternative and non-normative forms of "everyday engagement with and creative appropriations of Shi^{c}i sectarianism"[38]. "Sectarian identities (…) were at once private and public, communal and national, elite and subaltern, modern and traditional"[39].

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[37] Ibid, 1.
[38] Ibid, 4.
[39] Makdisi, *Culture*, 7.

1918-1946: '*le Mandat Français*'

From De Volney in the 18th C. to the Second Empire's direct involvement in the economy and the politics of the Beirut Vilayet and the *mutasarrifiyye*, the French colonial empire had further deepened its claws into the region. In 1916, the secret Sykes-Picot agreement dealt with the partitioning of the Ottoman Empire in a context of tight rivalry with the British colonial empire.[40] When French troops marched into Beirut, the *mutasarrifiyye* has already been included in the economic network of the Empire, linking the Lebanese mountains to the main port cities of the Mediterranean, amongst which Algiers, then already a French *département*, Tunisia's Bizerte and Marseille.[41] Greater Lebanon[42] thus quickly integrated the imperial network. Already in the 1918-20 war, the *pacification* of the blue zone had involved Moroccan, Algerian, and Senegalese *tirailleurs* implicitly charged with the mission of showing France's grandeur to the new colonies. The 1920s onwards thus saw the consolidation of the French colonial empire which started to emanate an imperial identity: obsession with modernity, the romanticization of the colonies and their dualities, and the creation of social hierarchies by which an elite among the colonized - the *évolués* (developed) - could emerge. Indeed, in order to preserve and expand its empire, the weakened metropole wretched by the damages of WWI had no choice but to alter its relationship to the colony, albeit selectively. New colonial centers emerged, of which Beirut's exponential and centralized development as a trade port and a cultural touristic hub became an illustrious example.[43]

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[40] On the eve of the Great War, the IIIrd French Republic had already presided over the 1885 Berlin conference during which it negotiated alongside other European colonizing powers the partitioning of the African continent. The entirety of North Africa, with the exception of Libya, as well as West and Central Africa, were under French colonial rule.

[41] On the French colonial empire in the Mediterranean, see: Julia Clancy-Smith, *Mediterraneans: North Africa and Europe in an Age of Migration, c. 1800-1900* (The California World History Library 15. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).

[42] 'Greater Lebanon' corresponds to the same territory as modern-day Lebanon. The qualification of 'Greater' means to compare the smaller unit of Mount-Lebanon to its larger form, Greater Lebanon. In 1943, Greater Lebanon loses the adjective Greater and remains simply Lebanon.

[43] This topic is discussed at large in : Carla Eddé, *Beyrouth: Naissance d'une capitale* (Beirut: Sindbad/Actes Sud, 2010).

This imperial context came to define the mandate policy towards Greater Lebanon. After a series of negotiations, Greater Lebanon was proclaimed on the 1st of September 1920, as an autonomous state separated from five other autonomous regions that constitute modern-day Syria.[44] Its borders included the *mutassarifiyye* and, roughly, the Beirut Vilayet for a variety of alleged reasons involving the preservation of a supposed historical Lebanon and the economic survival of a state as small as to be majorly inhabited by Christians[45]. In 1923, mandate rule followed the less French and more British model of colonial indirect administration by which colonial officers supervised – although very tightly – over an existing local state structure instead of exclusively composing the state structure themselves (direct administration). Although pragmatically both systems functioned the same way, the mandate only differed from a colony in that it was a system of governance approved by the League of Nations, whose potential end date was set to a time where indigenous societies were ready for self-governance and determination, the criteria of later having been left vague and undetermined.[46] In 1926, the Council of Representation proclaimed the Republic of Greater Lebanon's first Constitution, providing that each major confessional community should be equitably represented in the executive.[47] Thus, by convention, the President of the Republic was set to be a Maronite, the Prime Minister a Sunni Muslim, and the Speaker of Parliament a Shi^{c}i Muslim. In 1936, the French signed the very controversial *Traités Franco-Libanais* and *Franco-Syrien* that announced a potential independence for Lebanon and Syria as two permanently separated states, but their ratification was delayed by Second World War-related events.[48] Although its borders were contested by all those who fervently supported Syrian unity, only in 1943 did Lebanon gain independence.

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[44] Boustani, *Liban*, 278.
[45] Charles Corm, *La Revue Phenicienne*, Juillet 1919 (Beyrouth : Editions dar an-nahar : Editions de la revue phenicienne, 1996).
[46] Art. 22 of the Charter of the League of Nations.
[47] Weiss, *Shadow*, 39.
[48] Ibid, 109.

One of the major groups to oppose the borders of Greater Lebanon since its inception, then again in 1936 and in 1943 were the Shi^{c}a of Jabal ^{c}Amel/South Lebanon. In contrast with their Christian neighbors, when the French army took control of the blue zone, the Shi^{c}a had had very little contact with Europeans.[49] In fact, the results of the King-Crane commission show that the voters of the Beirut Vilayet preferred an American form of supervision over a French mandate, an election that was more popular in the southern and northern extremes of the vilayet, respectively Jabal ^{c}Amel and Tripoli.[50] Starting from 1918, the relationship between ^{c}Amili Shi^{c}is and their colonizing power appeared complex, characterized by an attitude of cautiousness, uncertainty, ambivalence, and colonial violence. In the pages that follow, research and critical analysis work hand in hand to demonstrate that the French's policy of violence, neglect, and erasure towards the Shi^{c}a nurtured their sectarianization.

The chronological scope of this study starts in 1918 in order to cover the very onset of Shi^{c}i-French contact during the 1918-1920 war between Emir Faysal and the French-British alliance, in which colonial military strategies, religious allegiances and instrumentations became motor of sectarian violence between the Maronites and the Shi^{c}a of the South. Interaction between ^{c}Amili Shi^{c}is and the mandate were however plural, and it is important for the reader to keep in mind that not all Shi^{c}is from the South adhered to a sectarian identification at the same moment or through identical processes. This thesis foreshadows critical moments in mandate history until the mid-1930s, by which large numbers of Southern Shi^{c}is participated in and underwent community-scale dynamics of sectarianization. Nevertheless, and despite the multidimensionality and multifacetedness of this process, this thesis, in aiming at documenting the sectarianization of

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[49] Ibid, 43.

[50] Mounzer Jaber, "Pouvoir et societe au Jabal 'Amil de 1749 a 1920 dans la conscience des chroniques chiites et dans un essai d'interpretation" (These de 3^{e} Cycle, Universite de Paris IV, 1978), 118.

masses, insists on the colonial strategical instrumentalization of policy making and of the relationship with the colonized which rendered the development of a Shi^{c}i sect hardly inextricable. In other words, even when the colonized masses were agents in their own sectarianization process, their sectarian behavior was a confectioned result of colonial rule. This research differentiates between the sectarianization of the elites, which Max Weiss covers in length in his second and third chapter, and that of the masses, the Shi^{c}a *fellah* (peasant).

Literature review

As mentioned previously in the discussion of Makdisi's work, sectarianism as a product of colonial-imperial dynamics has been the subject of multiple publications and schools of thought. Sectarianism in the Middle East and North Africa, nonetheless, has only been more recently examined as a colonial phenomenon in comparison to the Irish case for example. Orientalist writers generally considered that sectarianism was inherent to Arab societies, and that the main reason for that dwelled in the religious fanatism Islam supposedly inspired. The major breakthrough in Western historiography in dealing with the 'Orient', the 'Arab lands', came in 1978 with Edward Said's *Orientalism*, debunking centuries of colonial bias. Subsequently, historiography on the Ottoman Empire opened doors for competing narratives, emphasizing the Empire's unprecedented diversity and its plural strategies of managing coexistence. The 1980s saw the advent of major works participating in that effort, such as Zeynep Çelik's *The Remaking of Istanbul: Portrait of an Ottoman City in the Nineteenth Century* (1986), and Benjamin Braude's *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire; The Functioning of a Plural Society* (1982). At the same time, this literature inspired and exchanged with local Lebanese writings on Ottoman Syria and diversity, two of the most influential works being Leila Fawaz's *Merchants and Migrants in Nineteenth*

Century Beirut (1983) Abdul-Rahim Abu-Husayn's *Provincial Leaderships in Syria 1574-1650* (1985). It is the convergence of literature on the Ottoman Empire, post-colonial theory and 1990s subaltern studies that gave birth to a direct discussion of sectarianism in colonial contexts in the MENA. Such a topic already sparked the interest of many historians in the incontestable cases of Morocco and Algeria. Writing in the direct tradition of Edward Said's *Orientalism* and drawing on a multitude of sources Said made use of, Makdisi's *Culture of Sectarianism* (2000), and a driving inspiration for this work, brought the discussion of colonial sectarianism directly to the Lebanese case, revisiting great works of national histories such as Kamal Salibi's *House of Many Mansions*. In the following decade, the Lebanese Shi^{c}a started to blacken the pages of more pages in non-local historiography, such as Tamara Chalabi's *The Shi^{c}is of Jabal ^{c}Amil and the New Lebanon* published shortly before the July 2006 war in Lebanon. Her book, a pioneer work in the study of ^{c}Amili Shi^{c}is in the mandate period, is distinguished with its excellent use of sources from both Jabal ^{c}Amel and France. Writing a crossover of national history and colonial history, Chalabi does not subscribe to the historiography on colonial sectarianism though. This thesis builds enormously on the tremendous research work that Chalabi has done, the primary sources she has dug and the bulk of information and context she has provided her reader with. Her conciliation of dealing with the colonial Levant and writing in the framework of American academia heavily inspired the writing of this project. Her analytical lens, nevertheless, that of the integration of the Shi^{c}is in the new nation of Lebanon, remains only peripheral to my research, notwithstanding the idea that the Shi^{c}is became sectarian in order to complete their nationalization process[51]. More generally, the Shi^{c}as of Lebanon had been marginalized in historiography on the Lebanese mandate, which could be explained by mandate Beirut's domination over other regions and its

[51] As my research later develops on the point, this idea involves individual higher-class men who wished to integrate the Lebanese elite by adhering to the sectarian mosaic.

historiographic performativity.[52] Moreover, 1920-1943 has been written about extensively as a period of formation for Lebanese nationalism, rather than as a colonial period, leading historians to set aside marginal communities for whom the mandate consisted in a period of colonialization rather than nationalization. What has been published about Lebanese Shi^c^as has mainly dealt with either their status as a religious minority in the face of Sunni orthodoxy or with post-colonial dynamics relevant to the contemporary Middle Eastern politics and the civil war. Chalabi's work therefore stands out.

While Makdisi wrote about the process of sectarianization of the Druze and the Maronites, and building off of Chalabi's publication, Max Weiss undertook the initiative to examine ^c^Amili Shi^c^is under the mandate. His book *In The Shadow of Sectarianism* demonstrates that the mandate period represented the moment Shi^c^as in Lebanon started to become sectarian. His perspective focuses mostly on institutions, and more specifically law. "Sectarianism", according to him, "can be understood as an institutional set of arrangements determining familial, local regional and even broader kinds of loyalties"[53]. Following this point of view, Weiss's analysis of the Shi^c^a's sectarianization traces ways in which ^c^Amili Shi^c^is adapted, appropriated or bent to state mandated law. He argues that practicing sectarianism, through *waqf* management for instance, as an imposed legal framework, contributed to the solidification of sectarian identity.[54]

My historiographical contribution, and my core argument, intends to nuance this analysis, and open doors for a more horizontal, less institutional, understanding of sectarianism. The Empire of Law[55] that sustains colonial rule is not up to question in this work; however, in the specific case

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[52] Because of Beirut's strong centralizing power, most Lebanese histories or historical narratives from other historiographical fields deal with Beirut - or to some extent Mount Lebanon.
[53] Weiss, *Shadow*, 12.
[54] Ibid, 133-157.
[55] The expression is borrowed by Max Weiss from Saada in Emmanuelle Saada, "The Empire of Law: Dignity, Prestige, and Domination in the 'Colonial Situation'", *French Politics, Culture & Society* 20, no. 2 (1 January 2002).

that this research examines, social and political dynamics of exclusion, impoverishment and colonial violence left the Shi^{c}a collective with the concept that only the Shi^{c}i would help the Shi^{c}i, the core principle of French-concocted sectarianism. Colonial subjects were not passive to the machine of law, and with an example such as Jabal ^{c}Amel which resisted French occupation through war, concluding that, with the agreement of an elite, legal institutions introduced sectarianism to the Shi^{c}i community only offers an incomplete narrative. Rather, sectarian loyalties were confectioned by both the French administration's neglectful policies towards Jabal ^{c}Amel and a new elite attracted to the clientelist model.

In an attempt to write a social history, Weiss ended up writing more on the history of institutions and how they were used by agents, among which the colonized as well, rather than elaborating on what pushed the people to find shelter in the form of loyalties and affiliations offered by such institutions. Thus, in addition to writing about the marginal Shi^{c}as as colonial subjects, my intervention in the historiography on colonialism hopes to nuance the idea that legal systems acted as the main agents in producing colonial forms of knowledge, like sectarianism. In this perspective, the study of Lebanon appears highly relevant, as it is the example of colonial projects where legal sectarianism culminated. And it is in spite of that I demonstrate how sectarian – or sectarianizing – subjects were not the mere products of colonial law; they were first and foremost the product of the entire colonial moment.

My methodology borrows heavily from admirable pieces such as Ann Stoler's *Along the Archival Grain,* Dipesh Chakrabarty's *Provincializing Europe* as well as Gayathri Spivak's *Can the Subaltern Speak?* to mention a few. I have held particular attention to these works in dealing with French archival sources, and in an attempt at writing the history of the 19th C *subaltern*. In every instance in which the *archival grain* and the subjective veil led me to ask "what has really

happened beyond these lines of ink?", I resorted to these generous philosophies of history foreshadowing the ambitious - illusory? - nature of academic history to decolonize; perhaps one cannot but attempt to make the subaltern speak and write a history purely from the bottom.

This thesis develops into three chapters. **Chapter 1** covers the Ottoman background of the community previously referred to as *Matawila*, their relationship with the French as an imperial power, and their initial reactions to the French domination of Greater Syria. The 1918-1920 war between Emir Faysal and the French, and the way both entities sought to instrumentalize ᶜAmili Shiᶜis for military interests, occupies a focal place in this chapter. Chapter 1 deals with this war as the first episode of sectarian violence in the South, and as the first French-Shiᶜi contact and inter-confessional interaction in the context of Greater Lebanon.

Chapter 2 examines the active pauperization of Jabal ᶜAmel, the concept of *matlabiyya* (the politics of demand) and how the mandate's willful neglect of the South was designed to encourage the Shiᶜas into forming a sectarian identity. This chapter benefits greatly from the use of weekly reports – *Bulletins d'Informations Hebdomadaires* – keeping record of the exchanges between Southerners and the colonial officers administrating their *caza*. It traces how throughout the *bulletins* of different years, Shiᶜa demands for social services and infrastructures were rejected, and how they were met with an increasingly identitary revindication (*matalib*).

Chapter 3 consists in a case study of the establishment Jaᶜfari court, the first institution enforcing sectarianism in Shiᶜi milieu. Its process of creation confirms the colonial dynamics analyzed in the previous chapter and further demonstrates that the sectarianization of ᶜAmili Shiᶜis resulted from the overall colonial encounter between the French and the Shiᶜa, prior to the establishment of legal sectarianism.

Chapter 1
Borders of and borders within South Lebanon

The 1918-1920 period corresponds to a moment of turmoil of multiple natures. The two-year interval represents a violent period in which the reality of ᶜAmili Shiᶜis and the space they lived in shifted significantly, pre-determining how the Shiᶜa were to interact with the rest of Lebanese society and state for the next decades. I argue in this chapter that the French military campaign in the Levant, and the contest for allegiance to either the French or the Arab government, placed the Shiᶜa in a socio-political reality organized by sectarian rules.

Prior to the defeat of the Ottoman army in 1918, the Shiᶜa of Jabal ᶜAmel – then called the *Metawila* (plural of *Metwali*)[56] – were relatively living in isolation. Several accounts pinpoint their seclusion. On the one hand, the very few European travelers who dedicated a part of their writing to the *Metwali* iterated and reiterated this aspect of ᶜAmili Shiᶜi life. The most reliable travelogue is considered to be Uruqhart's account, in which he insisted on the Shiᶜa's effort to protect themselves from foreigners[57]. Constantin de Volney, Louis Lortet, Henri Lammens and Richard Roben Madden had also written about ᶜAmili Shiᶜis as a "distinct society"[58], and the protestant missionary William MacClure Thomson had gone into details, specifying that "These Metawelies do thus live separated, both in fact and feeling, from their neighbours, hating all, hated by all. Of course, they refuse to eat with all classes[59] except themselves"[60]. On the other hand, local

[56] Weiss, *Shadow*, 67.
[57] David Urquhart, *The Lebanon (Mount Souria)* (London: T. C. Newby, 1860), 230–231.
[58] Volney, *Voyage*, 245–246.
[59] By 'classes', it is best to assume that the author meant other confessional groups.
[60] Weiss, *Shadow, 43.*

narratives balanced European Orientalist views on the Shi^c^a, however maintaining the isolationist characteristic of their mode of life. *Wilayet Bayrut*, also identified as one of the *Salname*[61], is the main piece from the pre-mandate period including information about the Shi^c^a of Jabal ^c^Amel from an external perspective. It was commissioned in 1910 to Ottoman officials Muhammad Rafiq and Muhammad Bahjat and included a description of Jabal ^c^Amel and its communities as a part of the *vilayet* of Beirut. In this survey, ^c^Amili Shi^c^is are described as a community with "strange habits"[62] – many of which stemmed from heterodox Shi^c^a beliefs – defined by the strongly tribal nature of their socio-political organization, which set them as a rarely interactive and backward community. *Wilayet Bayrut*, also identified as one of the *Salname*[63], remains important to note the piece's intersection with Western accounts on the Shi^c^a's isolation. In addition to the conditions of rural and tribal life which Bahjat and Rafiq used to justify seclusion, the Shi^c^a engaged in *taqiyya* (occultation) under the Ottoman Empire, a process by which a heterodox Muslim group disguise and conceals its community by complying by the rules of the orthodox group and protect itself.[64] Both dimensions of ^c^Amili Shi^c^i life are essential to understand why the community held a less interactive attitude vis-à-vis its neighboring groups, i.e. Maronites, Greek Orthodox, Sunni and Druze disseminated all throughout Jabal ^c^Amel.

The arrival of European armies brutally and unexpectedly upended the quasi-isolationist mode of life that the Shi^c^a had developed and become accustomed to for nearly four centuries of Ottoman rule. The 1918-1920 period, between the French army's arrival until the declaration of

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[61] Translated from Ottoman-Turkish: 'Yearbook'. In the last decades of Ottoman reign, and in the same framework as the *Tanzimat*, the imperial administration started paying closer attention to their provinces and ordered the production of yearbooks documenting the conditions of their provinces (vilayets).
[62] Muhammad Bahjat and Rafiq Al-Tamimi, *Wilayat Bayrut* (Beirut, 1916), 292-295.
[63] Translated from Ottoman-Turkish: 'Yearbook'. In the last decades of Ottoman reign, and in the same framework as the *Tanzimat*, the imperial administration started paying closer attention to their provinces and ordered the production of yearbooks documenting the conditions of their provinces (vilayets).
[64] Etan Kohlberg, "Some Imami Views of *Taqiyya*." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 90 (1975), 395.

the state of Greater Lebanon, the Shiᶜa had to congregate as a political community and voice a political position. The main possible outcomes of World War I were, for Jabal ᶜAmel, either French mandate or the Arab rule of Emir Faysal over Greater Syria (promised to him by the British).

The power vacuum of WWI and the precipitated advent of a Shiᶜi political conscience

In the first week of October 1918, the Shiᶜa entered a phase whereby they became highly politicized by competing factions. While European powers in Beirut sought to legitimize the mandate and prepare for its onset, Emir Faysal declared Arab independence in Damascus on the first of October (25 Dhu Al-Hujjah 1336)[65]. This date marks a series of back-and-forth negotiations, petitions and letters meant to bargain the loyalty of the Shiᶜis to each power. In the two-year fight to align the Shiᶜa by their cause, both France and the Arab government set in train a process of sectarianization that characterized Jabal ᶜAmel's social dynamics for the entire mandate period.

First, the 1918-1920 war opposing the French against Faysal and the political negotiations that ensued disclosed to ᶜAmili Shiᶜis that they were neither side's priority. Faysal's government in Damascus mainly relied on Sunni notables from the coast for support[66]. Jabal ᶜAmel was a geographically strategic place for Faysal, as the only possible link between the coast (Beirut, Saida and Sour) and Syria's hinterland. The land of Jabal ᶜAmel itself, let alone its majorly Shiᶜa inhabitants, were not of particular interest for the Arab government[67]. Moreover, the French had built a special relationship with the Christians and worked hand in hand with the Maronites to get to Beirut in 1918. In the contest for allegiance, both players pushed ᶜAmili Shiᶜis in the background[68]. Shiᶜa representatives struggled to express their preferences and decide the fate of

[65] Suleyman Dahir, *Yawmiyyat 'Amili* (1930), 109.
[66] Tamara Chalabi, *The Shi'is of Jabal Amel and the New Lebanon* (New York: 2006), 67.
[67] Idem, 60-61.
[68] Idem, 73.

their politics. The 1919 Paris *Conférence de la Paix*, for instance, comprised of a Druze, a Maronite, a Greek Orthodox and a Sunni delegation, but excluded the Shi^{c}a[69]. The 1919 conference represents one example of the inherently sectarian way in which confessional groups were approached by Faysal and the French. Both sides thus dealt with the Shi^{c}as as a sectarian group (*ta'ifa*) rather than a group with social and economic demands. In addition, the secondary place that ^{c}Amili Shi^{c}is were relegated to instilled a sentiment of rejection and hesitation among Shi^{c}i elites with decision power.[70]

The social and political landscape of Jabal ^{c}Amel allows to better understand how the sectarianization process enacted by the 1918-1920 political turmoil affected the Shi^{c}a. By 1918, ^{c}Amili society consisted in four main categories: religious scholars of Shi^{c}ism (*^{c}ulema*, plural of *^{c}alim*), a form of traditional leaders finding their legitimacy in the names of their clan, called the *zu^{c}ama'* (plural of *za^{c}im*), the surging merchant bourgeoisie of urban *wujaha'* (plural of *wajih*, meaning notables) and the hinterland's peasants, which were in turn organized into multiple categories.[71] The turn of the 20th C. and the growth of port cities like Haifa and Beirut, saw the rise in power of notables from Saida and Sour within Jabal ^{c}Amel. These large merchant families –- such as the ^{c}Useyran, the Solh and the Zayn families – whether Sunni, Shi^{c}i, Maronite or Greek Orthodox, gradually acquired through interconfessional trade a social status rivaling against the traditional clans of Al-As^{c}ad from Tibnin and Fadl from Nabatiyeh.[72] Their reality reflected an urban mode of life by which confessional divisions faded in the profit of economic and social exchange, and by which their social status became a magnet for rural clientelist dependence and support, thus nurturing a consequent decline of the *zu^{c}ama'*'s power in the hinterland.

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[69] MAE-La Courneuve, Carton #46, « La Syrie devant la Conférence de la Paix », Cyrille Moghabghab, Paris, Jan. 1919.
[70] Chalabi, 77.
[71] Ibid, 11-23.
[72] Mounzer Jaber, "Pouvoir et societe au Jabal 'Amil de 1749 a 1920 dans la conscience des chroniques chiites et dans un essai d'interpretation" (These de 3^{e} Cycle, Universit. de Paris IV, 1978), 56.

By 1918, Shi^{c}a *wujaha'* found potential for more political and economic benefit in supporting Faysal's government because of two reasons: the coast longed to maintain and even strengthen its relationship with Damascus and its notables and intellectuals, and the French-Maronite exclusive alliance instilled insecurity among Muslims merchants[73]. Conversely, French officials promised protection to traditional power of the *zu^{c}ama'*, most specifically Kamil Bey Al-As^{c}ad[74].[75] Because of this polarization, the 1918-1920 moment equated to a war of petitions, by which both groups of individuals gathered, wrote petitions expressing their political position in favor of the French or to Emir Faysal. Hinterland Shi^{c}as, majorly under the influence of Kamil Bey Al-As^{c}ad, wrote more petitions in favor of the French[76].

According to Tamara Chalabi, "it is safe to assume that this period in modern 'Amili history was the first time in several centuries, if ever, that this community needed to formulate a political position"[77]. The politicization of ^{c}Amili Shi^{c}is as a sect reveals the assumption that their political preferences would differ from the non-Shi^{c}as living around them based on their confessional affiliation. Instead of expecting a unified position from ^{c}Amilis, both the mandate state's and the Arab state's approaches suggested that the Shi^{c}a of Jabal ^{c}Amel were a political entity of their own, distinct from the Sunni and Christian factions. Consequently, the first instance of modern political action for ^{c}Amili Shi^{c}is consisted in a sectarian moment. Secondly, the relegation of the Shi^{c}a as a second-degree interest, behind the Sunni coastal elite for Faysal, and behind Maronites and Greek Orthodox for the French, caused the ^{c}Amili Shi^{c}i traditional and economic elite to fold onto their

[73] MAE-La Courneuve, Carton #42, « Pétitions », Juillet 1919.
[74] Kamil Bey El-As^{c}ad is the son of ^{c}Ali Bey El- As^{c}ad who was considered the last *za^{c}im* under whom Jabal ^{c}Amil followed the *muqata^{c}ji* system. They belong to the larger Āl-Saghir family of *multazims* and *a^{c}yan* (landowners with political lobby vis-à-vis Ottoman administrators) which hold influence in the hinterland. A *za^{c}im* (pl. *zu^{c}ama*) is considered the rural Levantine position of traditional leader, in the sense that they derive political power from their historical reputation.
[75] Chalabi, 66.
[76] MAE-La Courneuve, Cartons #42-44, "Petitions", 1918-1919.
[77] Chalabi, 68.

religious identity. Indeed, instead of the ^{c}Amili or Muslim forms of identification, they resort the coining of the community as specifically and unequivocally Shi^{c}a. Furthermore, with the rift between the traditional power and the emerging bourgeois class, the 1918-1920 moment saw the high political participation, not just of clan chiefs and notables, but of the residents of their geographical circles of power[78] in the cities and in the hinterland as well, especially for the supporters of Faysal who were fueled with growing anti-French sentiment[79]. The Shi^{c}i identity being used as a vector of political preference – whether as Muslims in the Arab state protected from the Christian-leaning French rule, or as a Muslim minority promised protection from the French mandate – represented a first step towards the self-identification of ^{c}Amili Shi^{c}is as a sectarian group. This turmoil amounted to the conference of Wadi Hujayr, on April 20, 1920, which the second part of this chapter examines in detail. However, although the conference was a direct continuation of the political quagmire that started in 1918, it cannot be understood without the context of the series of sectarian violence that preceded it.

Starting from mid-1919, a series of violent actions exchanged between the Christians and the Shi^{c}as changed the political landscape of Jabal ^{c}Amil. It is unclear what specific event started the series of sectarian violence in 1919 between Shi^{c}a guerillas (عصابات or '*isabat* in Arabic sources) and Christians. The guerillas – designated in telegrams between the Arab government and French mandate officials as "les bandes de pillards" (meaning groups of looters) or "les bandits" (meaning delinquents)[80] – consisted in groups of "Bedouins or other low-class people"[81] guided by either a person or a group of people with more social power, such as notables, merchants,

[78] See footnote 17 on the social structure of the *za^{c}ama* and the *a^{c}yan*.
[79] MAE-La Courneuve, Cartons #42-44, "Petitions", 1918-1919.
[80] MAE-La Courneuve, Cartons #41, « Faysal en exil ». See : *Convention provisoire pour l'extradition des delinquants*, Gouraud, 5-11 july 1921.
[81] MAE-La Courneuve, Carton #41, « Faysal en exil ». See : *Documents concernant les rapports entre le Haut Commissaire de la Republique Francaise et l'Emir Faycal en 1920*, Ministre de la Guerre, signed Youssef El-Azmi, 1920.

zu^{c}ama' or even army officers from Damascus.[82] Around twelve ^{c}*isabat* were recorded in Jabal ^{c}Amil between 1919 and 1920, among which the *isaba* of Mohammad Bazzeh (a notable from Bint Jubayl), Ahmad Khanjar (a descendant of the Sa'b *zu^{c}ama* family of Nabatiyeh), Sadiq Al-Hamza (a descendant of the Al-As^{c}ad family), Fouad Slim and Ali Khulqi (two Arab army officers)[83].

The records of the first violent acts written on November 9^{th} by Sulayman Dahir, one of the three main early 20^{th} C. intellectuals of Jabal ^{c}Amel (the "^{c}Amili trio"[84]), describe the following: "Their main targets were Christian villages in the district of Sour and Marja^{c}youn where they steal livestock and cows. There have been attacks already on Khiam and Ibl Al-Saqi."[85]. Later records by Maronites from the *caza* of Marja^{c}youn included more violent acts, including looting, destruction, murder, the burning of fields and murder.[86] These attacks, however, cannot be understood outside of their unprecedented sectarian context, and the underlying economic factors that allowed for the convergence of class, confession, and allegiance.

As mentioned previously, a special relationship existed between the French and the Christians of the Levantine coast, ^{c}Amili Christians included.[87] French telegrams sent from General Robert de Caix to the metropole documented that in villages like Qulay^{c}a and ^{c}Ayn Ebel, and in Sour, Maronites celebrated the arrival of the French army by raising the French flag and singing *La Marseillaise*, the French national anthem[88]. The close alliance between the French and the Maronites, and the relegation of the Shi^{c}a in French interests in the Middle East together fueled

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[82] The practice of 'Amili *isaba* formation was born in WWI, during a period of severe famine, economic plight, and loss of hope. "A frustrated reaction to the impact of the war on their region" (See: Chalabi, *The Shi'is*, 74-75) is said to be one of the main reasons for the development of these violent groups who resorted to looting as a final means to ensure survival. These guerillas had waned in power in 1917 but resurged later in a more radical form in the second part of 1919 within a different context and a larger scale of powers at play. Fore more on the development of guerillas during WWI, see: Tylor Brand, Famine Worlds. Life at the edge of suffering in Lebanon's Great War (Stanford University Press, 2023).
[83] Jaber, « Pouvoir », 125-130.
[84] The Amili Trio of intellectuals was composed of Sulayman Dahir, Ahmad Rida, Muhammad Jabir Al-Safa, and unintuitively, a fourth member: Shaykh Ahmad ^{c}Aref Al-Zayn.
[85] Dahir, 137.
[86] MAE-La Courneuve, Carton #42, "Petitions", *S.N. Requete, Caza de Merjayoun*, 13 December 1919.
[87] Chalabi, 73.
[88] MAE-La Courneuve, Carton #1-5, "Affaires Politiques et Generales", *Reception du General Gouraud*.

the guerillas' violence. Suleyman Dahir wrote: "[The Christians of these areas] see that the government is not defending them, so we see them today fleeing with their belonging and livestock. This is the price they have to pay for supporting the occupation forces."[89] The account of Christians fleeing might confuse the reader since the French, reputed for protecting the Christians of the Orient, were already stationed in the South, but the reasons why the French did not intervene actively at that point of the conflict will be elaborated later in the chapter, and constitute a core part of its argument.

Thus, the Shi^c^a *'isabat*'s sectarian violence against Maronite villages stemmed from the Maronites' support for the French colonial occupation. This finds more substantiation in the French's weaponization of the Christians, with "300 000 weapons"[90] that were sent in December 1919, and the creation, in turn, of Maronite guerrillas such as the ones headed by Ibrahim Francis and 'Id Al-Hurani Al-Kfur.[91] Furthermore, correspondences between Emir Faysal's secretary in Damascus, ^c^Aouni Abdel-Hady, and the French General Robert de Caix mentioned the presence of Christian volunteers in the French army, therefore supporting the idea that the line between ^c^Amili Christians and the French occupation had become extremely thin and blurry in the understanding of ^c^Amili Shi^c^is.[92] This was furthered by the sectarian language of French officials which recognized ^c^Amili '*isabat* as "Shi^c^a rebel groups"[93], underlining their confessional affiliation as a core part of their identity. Gradually, between the start of guerrillas' clashes in mid-1919 until the conference of Wadi Hujayr, the level of violence escalation has made it less obvious to distinguish between a brigade committed to fight against the occupation and one using the

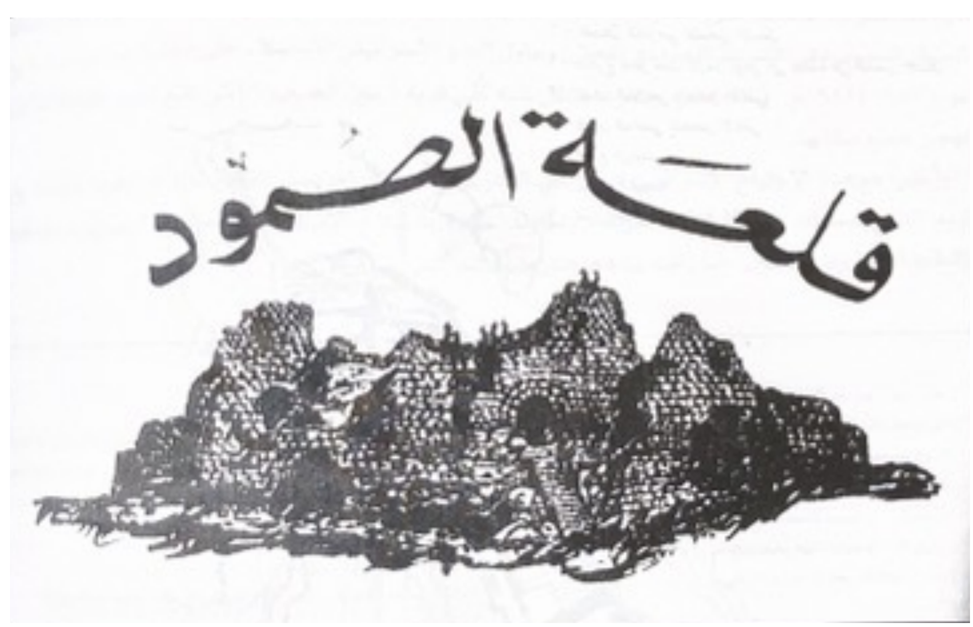
[89] Chalabi, 74.
[90] MAE-La Courneuve, Carton #41, « Faysal en exil ». See : *Documents concernant les rapports entre le Haut Commissaire de la Republique Francaise et l'Emir Faycal en 1920*, Ministre de la Guerre, signed Youssef El-Azmi, 1920.
[91] Dahir, 142.
[92] MAE-La Courneuve, Carton #41, "Faycal en exil", Annexe 13 : *Lettre du secretaire de Faysal*, 28 May 1920.
[93] MAE-La Courneuve, Carton #41, « Faysal en exil ». See : *Documents concernant les rapports entre le Haut Commissaire de la Republique Francaise et l'Emir Faycal en 1920*, Ministre de la Guerre, signed Youssef El-Azmi, 1920.

political chaos as a pretext to loot, and it is not clear either how the line between Christian and colonizer (i.e. French) evolved in the Shi^{c}a perspective.[94] The memory of these groups in Shi^{c}a historiography consists in an example documenting how blurry this line was. In November 1931, the Shi^{c}i journal *Al-^{c}Irfan*, edited by Shaykh ^{c}Aref Al-Zayn, included an article hailing the exemplary "heroes of 1920", referring to Bazze, Al-Hamza and insisting particularly on Ad-ham Khanjar, all three of them being leaders of 1919-20 "bandits". The article narrated several instances of battles led by Khanjar in the Sheqif region, but the '*isaba* were presented as resistance, and the resistance was introduced as ^{c}Amili, not exclusively Shi^{c}i, and their opponents were designated as the "colonizers". The article did not present the Sheqif battle as a battle between Shi^{c}a and Christians, but rather as an act of ^{c}Amili resistance against "European occupation."[95] *Al-^{c}Irfan* was indeed known as the first Southern journal to publish in 1920 an article condemning sectarian divisions along confessional lines.[96] Therefore, there exists confusion as to how to conciliate the heroization of anti-colonial guerrilla leaders with the accounts reporting their unprecedented level of sectarian violence. Parallel to this was the line blurring Christians and colonizers in the Shi^{c}a perspective, in rural areas mostly, until 1920. What is clear, however, is that the level of convergence between Maronite and French identities was the main fuel to the violence of the '*isabat* and to the ideological support of this violence by some intellectuals like Shaykh Suleyman Dahir and Shaykh ^{c}Aref Al-Zayn. Such was born sectarian violence in Jabal ^{c}Amel.

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[94] Arabic terminologies play a trick here: although words such as foreigner ("ifranji") or French ("ifransi") were already of use, 'Amili Shi'is kept referring to French soldiers and officials as "Christians".
[95] *Al-^{c}Irfan*. Vol. 2, 1931.
[96] *Al-^{c}Irfan*. Vol. 1, 1930.

FIGURE 4: Press illustration made in the 1920s representing Qal^{c}at Sheqif (the Castle of Sheqif) where Ad-ham Khanjar fought and lost to the French army.[97]



Legend: The artist, exact date and place of publication are unknown. The Arabic script says: "The Castle of Steadfastness".

Complementing the colonizer/colonized rift between the Maronites and the Shi^{c}a was the socio-economic status between the hinterland ^{c}Amili Shi^{c}is and their Christian neighbors. On the one hand, the French-Maronite close relationship brought about its own economic haul to the Christians of the Levantine coast. Chalabi specifies that "Maronite villages in the South were wealthier and more developed, in part because of the role of the Church and financial support from immigrants abroad"[98] thus widening the economic gap between ^{c}Amili Muslims and Christians. On the other hand, certain guerilla leaders had economic motive for their attacks. From the continuation of WWI famine and dire conditions to the economic blow imposed by the *Régie du Tabac* since the turn of the century, and the disruptions of trade routes due to growing Zionist

[97] ʻAlī Ḥusayn Mazraʻānī, *al-Nabaṭīyah fī al-dhākirah : 1860-1999 M : ṣuwar wa-wathā'iq : 900 ṣūrah wa-wathīqah* (Bayrūt : ʻA.Ḥ. Mazraʻānī, 1999),434.
[98] Chalabi, 74.

settlements such as in Mutalleh (Metula)[99], hinterland Shi^c^is, especially peasants, had seen their economies plummet since the 1880s. Moreover, the leaders of these ‘*isabat* came from waning branches of traditional power, such as the Sa’b family in the case of Khanjar, and the Fadl beys of Nabatieh in the case of Sadiq Al-Hamza, who grew up in extreme poverty.[100] This explains why reports indicated that the guerrilla groups mainly organized looting operations and robberies. In a December 1919 letter titled “Request” from 18 inhabitants of Christian villages to the anticipated High Commissioner of the French Republic in Syria, Maronite residents of the Marja^c^youn *caza* wrote in detail that the ‘*isabat* “attacked the buildings of landowners, looted [the Christians’] herd, burnt their crops.”[101] They insisted in the same later that they were first and foremost attacked economically and that their primary needs were material. The economic gap seems to thus be one of the motives partially nurturing initial violence from Shi^c^a ‘*isabat* against Christian villages. Anti-French, and larger anti-European, sentiments cannot be disentangled from the economic gap: the Shi^c^a had already experienced by 1919 the deplorable consequences of French control over tobacco production in Jabal ^c^Amil, which explains how economic frustration could also be oriented against French and ecclesiastic economic support of the Maronites and against French colonial presence in general.

In sum, the political rift between the Francophile Maronites and the neglected hinterland Shi^c^a, and its sectarian framing by French military and administrative officials, along with the widening socio-economic gap between both confessional communities, set in train a process of sectarianization by which the Shi^c^a perceived the Maronites as supporters - if not a major actor -

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99 Idem, 18-19.
100 Idem, 73.
101 MAE-La Courneuve, Carton #42, “Petitions”, *S.N. Requete, Caza de Merjayoun*, 13 December 1919.

of colonial occupation and as a further obstacle to their economic bloom. On the flipside, on the more political scale of this matter, men of power, *wujaha'* and *zuᶜama'*, were engaging in the colonial rhetoric of expressing a political preference as a cohesive ᶜAmili Shiᶜi group, but also as a relegated group among other confessional communities. The conflicting bourgeoisie and tribal power each pulled on Shiᶜa identity to gather support for either side – the French's or Faysal's – through petitions.

The 1918-1920 war marks the Shiᶜa's first major political participation, and thus heavily influenced their definition and later perception of politics. The almost coercive sectarianization through French divide and rule categorization of the *Metawila* as the unequivocal and unidimensional "Chiites du Djebel Amel" and the less direct sectarianization through social factors and political polarization both enacted a series of sectarian violence that Jabal ᶜAmel had not previously borne witness of in modern history.

Sectarian politics in « le Congrès de Wadi Al-Hujayr »

Pressure to emit a unified Shiᶜa decision was applied by Faysal's government on Kamil Bey Al-Asᶜad, who urgently summoned a meeting on April 20th, 1920, in light of the escalating violence of lootings. The pressures put on him by both French authorities[102] and the Arab government, led to the organization of a conference in the valley of Wadi Al-Hujayr.[103] This conference consisted in the first instance of a Shiᶜa assembly gathered for the sake of producing a unified political position, and thus marked a culmination – up until then – for the Shiᶜa identity as a catalyzer of a political will. What this conference also marked is the beginning of a last cycle of

[102] Chalabi, 77.
[103] Dahir, 206.

increasing sectarian and colonial violence, which kept reverberated during the entirety of mandate period, and beyond.

What historians know of the Wadi Al-Hujayr conference is very limited, in comparison to the other events surrounding the 1918-1920 period. So far, no historian has been able to collect a record of what has been discussed during the conference word by word, idea by idea. This ironically contradicts the amplitude of the conference, which was so important in matters of politics and security "to the point that no human being able to walk or to ride an engine wasn't going to Wadi Al-Hujayr".[104] Tamara Chalabi suggests that 'Amili intellectuals intentionally kept the conference unrecorded until they rewrote its history in the 1940s.[105]

The account that best delineates this event remains to this day Mounzer Jaber's dissertation, "Pouvoir et Société au Jabal Amil de 1749 à 1920 dans la conscience des chroniqueurs chiites et un essai d'interprétation" published in 1978. Although published half a century after the events, Mounzer Jaber's work on the 1918-1920 moment consists in a summary of primary sources and interviews of Southern actors themselves, and in that regard, it could be perceived as a primary source itself for this work.

The Wadi Al-Hujayr conference set a precedent in the local relationship between confessional affiliation, political decision, sovereignty, and 'Amilis. It took place on the 24th of April, thus four days after Kamil Al- As^{c}ad's invitation, in valley whose symbolism will be of particular relevance to the next chapter. "The invitations called for the ^{c}Ulema, the A^{c}yan (imposing and powerful landowners) and the intellectuals of the Shi^{c}a community. It was impossible to ignore the ^{c}*isabat* which is why Sadiq Hamzi and Adham Khanjar were invited. (…)

[104] Jaber, 146.
[105] Chalabi, 78.

Every party gathered and enlisted their human forces".[106] And although anterior examples of the involvement of the 'popular masses' (the '*ahali*) exist[107], the Wadi Al-Hujayr moment completely debunked the earlier idea that political discussion is reserved to the *zu^{c}ama* and excluded peasants and lower-class merchants.

How then did the Wadi Al-Hujayr gathering instill and manifest sectarian feeling?

First of all, the congregation was exclusively Shi^{c}i and sought to conclude on both a Shi^{c}i response and a ^{c}Amili response to the 1918-1920 turmoil. Furthermore, the meeting was held in the stronghold of the ^{c}*isabat*, a group of armed men whose frustration from WWI's widening of inequalities in Jabal ^{c}Amel crystalized into sectarian feelings towards French-leaning wealthier Christian villages. The conference itself thus performed this sectarian feeling. The congregation resulted in two decisions: the first being the proclamation of Emir Faysal as the rightful king over Jabal ^{c}Amel, and the second – and most surprising element – being a decision to turn Jabal ^{c}Amel into an *autonomous* province of Greater Syria. Not only does this demonstrate that ^{c}Amili Shi^{c}is were constantly looking towards and comparing themselves with the Mount Lebanon autonomous *mutassarifiyye*, but it also highlights a will to merge Shi^{c}i confessionalism with political rule by creating a Shi^{c}i proto-state. The project of the autonomous entity of Jabal ^{c}Amel eventually never saw light, making it difficult to presume what its hypothetical executive structure would have resembled.[108] Whether this hypothetical ^{c}Amili autonomous region was meant to exclude

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[106] Jaber, 141.

[107] El-Hayek, '"How, Then, Did You Try to Rebel?"', (Slow Factory). In this article written as an homage to his mentor Abdul Rahim Abu Husayn, Charles El Hayek shows a Maronite-Shi^{c}i alliance of the ahali in the Keserwan region (*caza* of Zahle - see map) against the zu^{c}ama'. However, Zahle's Shi^{c}a live a completely different political reality than ^{c}Amilis. The exchanges between Zahle's Shi^{c}a and Jabal ^{c}Amel's Shi^{c}a could be an interesting starting point in determining whether the Keserwan rebellion echoed in Jabal ^{c}Amel. Historiography on the matter has yet to be produced.

[108] Jaber, 142. The mention of the Shi^{c}i autonomous political entity of Jabal ^{c}Amel appeared only in this context. It seems that popular desires were not necessarily oriented towards such a project. ^{c}Amili notables and landowners with socio-political influence constantly looked at the way Mount-Lebanon, *the* Lebanese mountain, developed which might explain why they longed for the autonomy of their own mountain. This actively shows that in the decisive 1918-1920 period, the Shi^{c}a saw themselves by reflection of other confessional groups that were already sectarianized.

Christians is impossible to know, but what is clear is that they were not included in the decision-making process as a result of the violent encounters between the ᶜ*isabat* and ᶜAmili Christians, which had created a first sectarian rift across the region.

While a delegation was sent to Damascus to express the congress's decision vis-à-vis the Arab government, a war of narratives was taking place in Jabal ᶜAmel. Journals played an undeniable role in circulating sectarian narratives pitting each confessional group against the other. Their historiographical relevance dwells furthermore in their capacity to represent and document what narratives existed within ᶜAmili circles of different religions. Word about the Wadi Al-Hujayr conference spread quickly across the region, and the Christian response to the cryptic, strictly Shiᶜa meeting was one of serious angst given on the memory of the 1860[109] events and on the French discourse on the Shiᶜa. Indeed, already in April 1920, a group of French generals had settled in Sour and had opened an office for the "French government in Sour", establishing strong and continuous contact with several villages like ᶜAyn Ebel and Rmeish where they also created a network of French associations hand-in-hand with the local Christian populations. The largest of such associations was "the Union of Youth, in ᶜAyn Ebel, whose purpose was to unify the hearts of the youth around action and good deeds, and to propagate the good deeds of France and its good intentions vis-à-vis the country"[110]. These associations also spread French teachings about Lebanon, its history, and its people, amongst whom the Shiᶜa.[111] As a result, the Christian reaction to Wadi Al-Hujayr manifested in the journal *Al-Bashir* which, noticing "the increasing speed at

[109] Christians of the Lebanese area have suffered from the burden of memory and its performativity in the 19th and 20th C. Indeed, memory of the 1820 incidents between Druze and Maronites loomed over the 1840 period, and so on, and the memory of the 1918-1920 moment remained engraved in Maronite collective conscience until the mid-1950s. Precedent persecutions have served as a catalyzer of anxiety and as a precipitator of future violence due to the cautiousness of not being attacked before attacking.
[110] Jaber, 150.
[111] Little is known of the content of the French propaganda on Shiᶜis towards Southern Maronites, but the French perspective on Shiᶜis were not positive either way, as the first section of this chapter showed.

which the congress attendees precipitated to buy weapons"[112], stated that "the Shi^c^a united to destroy Christian villages so that they can end Christian presence in Jabal ^c^Amel and so that the Shi^c^a become absolute rulers in the country"[113]. Issues in the journal *Al-Mashriq* circulated similar narratives, with the example of a persecuted nun fleeing to Damascus, Clémentine Khayyat, becoming famous[114]. In these narratives issued by Christian voices, the sectarian dichotomy was obvious and unquestionable: in their views, and in the views they very actively disseminated and reinforced, it was a matter of Shi^c^a – thus religious – enemies, rather than pro-Faysal political enemies per se.[115] ^c^Amili Christians were therefore actively villainizing their Muslim neighbors; and, in the context of a villainizing narrative paralleled with a victim narrative, ^c^Amili Maronites perpetuated the sectarian vocabulary that the French applied in their Orientalist reading of the region[116]. The sectarian discourse that exploded around and after the Wadi Al-Hujayr conference is perfectly illustrated by Mounzer Jaber recording two common slogans that developed around the 24th of April and that spread among the *ahali*: "Vive, vive la France / Vive la religion de la croix"[117], against its Shi^c^a counterpart: "Etouffez, mourez, ennemis / Le pouvoir sera chérifien"[118]. These slogans convey how sectarian language – and performatively, sectarian feeling – spread among and across social classes in Jabal ^c^Amel.

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[112] Jaber, 151.
[113] Ibid.
[114] Ibid.
[115] A short record from the Wadi Al-Hujayr conference, however, states that "Sadiq stood in front of the ^c^Ulema who held the Qur'an in their hands and asked him [in reaction to the looting and attacking spree that started in mid-1919] to stop attacking any citizen from Jabal ^c^Amel be they Christians or Muslims, which he swore to obey, except for the betrayers who collaborate with the French at the expense of his country and the independence of his country, be they Muslims or Christians or from any other religion because 'our struggle, said he, is political and not sectarian" (See: Jaber, 143). This is, of course, to be read along the grain and against the grain of the writer Shaykh Ahmed Rida, a *wajih* from the ^c^Amili trio who strongly supported the *^c^isabat*. However, the ^c^Ulema's positions of constraint and defense of the *dhimmis* – the people of the book – is non-neglectable in this narrative. After all, the political configuration of Faysal's kingdom or his discourse was far from excluding Christians.
[116] This refers not only to the Orientalist texts mentioned in the very beginning of this chapter but also to the vocabulary of Orientalist nature that belittled Shi^c^is and Muslims in general.
[117] Translated from French: "Long live, long live France / Long live the religion of the cross".
[118] Translated from French: "Suffocate, die, you enemies / power will be at the hands of Faysal".

Colonial military strategy and the orchestration of the ^{c}Ayn Ebel massacre

With growing sectarian tensions, murders, lootings, and ultimately, political congregations, on the 5th of May 1920, and while Muhammad Bazzi's[119] growing *^{c}isaba* gathered in the Shi^{c}a village of Kunin and chanted "How good to smoke a cigarette! / It is the day to slaughter the Christians", a Shi^{c}i milk seller came back from the village of ^{c}Ayn Ebel complaining about being harassed and attacked by Christians. Bazzi's group – the sources' numbers range from 300 to 7,000 – headed towards the village and committed the ^{c}Ayn Ebel massacre (*majzaret ^{c}Ayn Ebel*), killing around a hundred, until "nothing was left from ^{c}Ayn Ebel except burnt stones"[120]. The massacre was documented extensively in both *Al-Bashir* and *Al-Mashriq*. It however needs to be contextualized in the framework of colonial strategy, and the divide and conquer policy of the French Colonel. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, since the very first developments of the sectarian conflict in 1919, ^{c}Amili Christians called for the French's help through *mazbatas*[121] and letters sent by religious leaders directly to the South representative as well as to Beirut. An account from Antanus Saqr includes the following:

> "I accompanied a delegation in Sour which was seeking help from the French Commandant of the Bastière. He apologized for not being able to satisfy our request because he feared Sadiq Hamzi. He could not send even one soldier to ^{c}Ayn Ebel to defend its inhabitants. He was fearing for himself and slept in the sea, fearing an attack from rebels. He showed however weapon stocks to the delegation while saying to us: here are the stocks, take how much ever you want, in terms of guns and ammunition, and defend your villages by yourselves. The more the situation got worse, the more the weapon race seemed crucial for survival in Christian spaces. It seemed like the only way to defend ourselves against the Shi^{c}i 'flood' if it were to happen. France sent an Armenian officer to train the villagers who took weapons from the French stock. Anyone could take any weapon according to their liking, but at one condition: they told us for every bullet we should bring back the head of a Shi^{c}a. One of us joked: how do we hold their heads? He got answered: Bringing their ears will make do."[122]

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[119] The Bazzi family, originally from the surroundings of Nabatiyeh, is a family of *zu^{c}ama* whose power had gradually waned over the 19th C.. Although they were not as powerful as the Āl-Saghir family, they exerted influence in the Marje^{c}youn *caza*.
[120] Jaber, 162.
[121] A *mazbata* consisted in a widespread form of petitioning among Christian Levantines. It presented who voted for the demand, and in certain instance, who voted against.
[122] Jaber, 163.

The passage puts forth the nature of sectarian violence which developed rapidly during the two-year war. Obviously, the Nieger Campaign, which is covered in detail below, proved that what the Commandant said about the French army's incapacity was erroneous. Multiple were the goals of such evasion: pitting Southern Christians against their Shi^{c}a neighbors and vice-vera, creating a Christian sectarian front (with the figure of the Armenian), preserving France's image on the scene of colonial competition in the light of the upcoming San Remo conference, and leaving space for dramatic escalations whereby the French would be compelled to intervene as the protector of the Christians of the Orient[123]. The episode almost sparks a *déjà vu* of the 1858-1861 massacres of Mount Lebanon; this was the classic French seed that grew into sectarian divisions.

For the French, the ^{c}Ayn Ebel massacre represented an opportunity for colonial *pacification*, such was the 'Nieger campaign'. The *mission civilisatrice* framework is equally undeniable, and what remains to this day a particularity of Lebanon is how Christian colonial subjects despite their status as colonized found agency in acting alongside colonizers, to the extent that the journal *Al-Bashir* celebrated the French invasion of ^{c}Amili hinterland "after ignorance allied with savagery and fanatism with barbary"[124]. On the 8th of May – three days after the events of ^{c}Ayn Ebel – Commandant Nieger led 4,000 French men with Christian Lebanese support to obliterate all the *^{c}isabat* and with them any national aspiration Jabal ^{c}Amel might have ever developed. The details of the Nieger campaign were recorded in 1920 by Shaykh Sulayman Dahir and later written about in Shaykh Ahmad Rida's 1943 *Al-^{c}Irfan* collection on Jabal ^{c}Amil's recent history.

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[123] The trope of the "Protector of the Christians of the Orient" finds its roots directly in the Franco-Russian rivalry over Jerusalem - at stake in the Crimea War of the 19th C - over the control of the Christian Holy sites. For France, this was directly related to the history of the Crusades, where French rivalry against Russia emerged, and tied to control of resources rather than persecution of Ottoman persecution of Christians.

[124] Jaber, 164.

In early June, Nieger's campaign committed several terror attacks across Jabal ᶜAmel, including the siege of Bint Jbeil, public hanging, aerial attacks, brutal looting, the burning of villages and the destruction of entire harvests. Certain terror methods remained in ᶜAmili memory and haunted its inhabitants' psyche for years, as the chapter will show. On June 5th, Nieger gathered what ᶜAmili – and soon-to-be Southern – Christian notables in Saida and issued a decree mandating from the 200 ᶜAmili Shiᶜis *aᶜyan* to pay a reparative sum of 100,000 Egyptian guineh (or 150,000 Syrian golden Lira), to give up all the wanted "criminals", to deprive all ᶜAmili Shiᶜis from any weapon, and to bear responsibility for any crime that might occur in the *cazas* of Saida, Sour and Marjeᶜyoun.[125] Until today, Nieger's name, along with the blood that he spilled and the tears that he mocked, reverberate as a street's name in the Lebanese capital.

On how to understand the sectarian dimension of the 1918-1920 moment, Mounzer Jaber explains that "the sectarian aspect was, in fact, at the heart of political attitudes of the two parties because it could justify diverses practices that had become, in the lived political reality, just ideas for both parties. Sectarianism was not then an element added from an external actor and imposed to Jabal ᶜAmel".[126] In other words, for Jaber who wrote in 1978 and published in Paris, at the peak of the Lebanese civil war (1975-1990), sectarianism was embedded in the political fate of the region: ᶜAmili Christians chose the protection of the French over an Arab state, and their neighbors, the Shiᶜa, were in great numbers strongly opposed to foreign occupation and the domination of Mount Lebanon, and each party's fractal political cause entailed violence against the other. This

[125] Jaber, 167. Surprisingly, the Nieger campaign does not appear in detail in iterations of ᶜAmili history by ᶜAmili historians that were contemporary to the event. I have only encountered literary references during my research, but no detailed narrative. Mounzer Jaber succeeds at writing this narrative by interviewing contemporaries. Making sense of the silences and deciphering literary references, however, help a lot in understanding how much psychological damage was caused by the military campaign. An example is provided in chapter 2.
[126] Ibid, 172.

chapter, however, revises Jaber: sectarianization was not as unidimensional and inevitable. French imperial influence and colonial conquest of the blue zone strategized around sectarian borders. Since the 1860s and the consolidation of the *mutasarrifiyye* with the French's constant involvement, ^{c}Amili Christians adopted the 'protector of the Christian of the Orient' narrative. French investment into Maronite institutionalization was not hazardous; indeed, it mainly consisted in the cultivation of an idea that Christians needed an exclusive state, and the political strategies of non-interventionism at times and interventionism at others converged with the play on the French/Christian blurred line in an attempt to divide and conquer successfully. Sectarianism was introduced from outside Jabal ^{c}Amel: the brutal conversion of Jabal ^{c}Amel into South Lebanon came from the French colonial policy of creating nation-state borders for Greater Lebanon, an implanted project watered throughout decades prior to the 1918-1920 moment, the latter representing a mere moment of acceleration of political and social dynamics induced by WWI. Needless to say, this all applies to a time where the project of sectarian law had not been thought through yet, challenging the idea that legal systems worked as the main processes of sectarianization for ^{c}Amili Shi^{c}is.

Chapter 1 thus showed how sectarianism was introduced to Jabal ^{c}Amel during the 1918-1920 political turmoil amid war for independence and colonial conquest. As an intentional project of divide-and-rule concocted by French military strategists, pro-Faysal/pro-mandate divide established and blurred a parallel Shi^{c}i/Christian divide through which sectarian violence effused and leveraged French pacification.

Chapter 2:
Confectioning the image of the pleading Shi^{c}a peasant

On the 31st of August 1920, *Arrêté #318* was promulgated by the French government in Beirut, legally instituting “le Grand Liban” as territorial entity, with geographic delimitations including Jabal ^{c}Amel within.[127] Exactly five months later, a French-British convention defined the Lebanese-Palestinian border in territorial and political terms.[128] In the meantime, following the Nieger campaign, the ^{c}Amilis had temporarily abandoned the project of a Syrian unity (“unité syrienne”[129]) and most Shi^{c}i notables from the South had paid respects and pledged loyalty to the French High Commissioner of the Republic in Lebanon.[130]

This chapter explores a new reality for ^{c}Amili Shi^{c}is whereby they became part of a politically charged nation-state. The political, economic but more importantly for our discussion here, social centers and spheres changed. While in the Beirut Vilayet, the *Vali* (governor) would consider them as peasants and merchants that connect Saida to Safad and Sour to Damascus, in the new Lebanese state the Shi^{c}a were perceived as the marginal group, the fence that separates the Lebanese under the French rule and the Palestinians under British rule.[131] The following pages will show that from 1920 until the early 1930s, ^{c}Amili Shi^{c}is grew increasingly different from the rest of the Lebanese mosaic of Druze, Sunnis, Maronites and Orthodox, among other sects, through

[127] MAE-Nantes, Carton #1/SL/1/V/1560, *Organisation du Mandat*, « Liste Chronologique des Principaux Évènements politiques de l’État du Liban de 1918 a 1920 », 14 Mars 1930.
[128] Ibid.
[129] The concept of Syrian Unity represented a major concern for colonial officers during the mandate. France’s mandate state archives in Nantes are classified according to ‘l’unité syrienne’: every movement or proto-movement between Syria and Lebanon scared the French enough to open an investigation and organize their files around it. In this case, the structure of the archives tell us what a document might not enunciate as clearly: the French colonial empire in the Levant relied on the separation of Syria and Lebanon. The ‘divide and conquer’ strategy takes on full significance in this context.
[130] MAE-Nantes, Carton #1/SL/1/V/2414, *Lettres de Fidélité*, 1920.
[131] Until 1925, the border between Palestine and Lebanon is discussed and rediscussed depending on colonial rivalries and both the Zionist project in Palestine as well as the Christian project of ensuring Mount-Lebanon and Beirut’s survival.

the way they – and their land, South Lebanon – were neglected by the mandate administration, thus creating a social, economic, and political reality of the forever struggling "Shi^{c}a". This social identity conflated with the formation of a public religious identity, and in the concert of confessional groups that is Lebanon, the Shi^{c}a strived to become visible. Religious affiliation and socio-economic reality fed onto one another to produce the Shi^{c}a sect.

"One mountain swallowing another"

This section will cover the social disparity between ^{c}Amili Shi^{c}is and their neighbors – including their ^{c}Amili neighbors – and how mandate administration actively worked to widen this gap. In order to achieve this purpose, it is necessary to cover the social context of the early mandate period. As previously mentioned, the social structure of Jabal ^{c}Amel prior to the French's arrival consisted in – simplistically – the *zu^{c}ama*, the *a^{c}yan* (landowners), the *wujaha'* and the *ahali* (the 'commoners': peasants, workers and lower-class merchants). Egyptian rule in the Beirut Vilayet (1820-40), the domination of Beirut on the vilayet's economy, and the creation of the Beirut-Damascus Road in the second part of the 19th C. had already contributed to the economic decline of Jabal ^{c}Amel. The *Tanzimat* period starting around the 1850s saw considerable changes in the land regime as well, establishing four distinct impeding taxes on ^{c}Amili peasants, to the extent that, after his 1870 visit (already), Louis Lortet lamented how the "miserable Mitwalis, like other neighboring groups, were absolutely ruined by crushing taxes that were most often collected with a revolting ferocity" [132].[133]

Indeed, in July 1937, Mohammad Jabir Āl-Safa published an article as part of his series "Pages from Jabal ^{c}Amil's history" in *Al-^{c}Irfan*'s 37th volume. This article pertains a section titled

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[132] Chalabi, 21.
[133] On how the Tanzimat period affected South Lebanon: Weiss, 54-58.

“Jabal ^{c}Amel after the collapse of the *iqta^{c}i* system”[134], which includes detail on Ottoman taxation and, more importantly, on the *Régie du Tabac*. The *Régie* sits next to the countless examples of colonial institutions whose establishment was coerced by the French in the context of Ottoman indebtment to European banks. In 1884, the Ottoman government created the *Régie* as a sub-institution dependent on the foreign-owned *Régie co-intéressée des tabacs de l’Empire Ottoman*.[135] Muhammad Jabir Āl-Safa’s “Pages from Jabal ^{c}Amil’s history” stressed on the Turkish state’s “policy of pauperization” towards Jabal ^{c}Amel and how it sought to “weaken [its people], famish it and impoverish it”[136] through the *Régie*. Nothing was aleatory in the author’s decision to write and publish such an article in 1937. The aftermath of the Tobacco Revolution of 1936 will be detailed later in this thesis, but Mohammad Jabir Āl-Safa dug into the roots of the *Régie* in order to reflect on ^{c}Amili history because of the institution’s transformative effect on the region. As Tamara Chalabi puts it: “it [the *Régie*] was perceived as an oppressive tool of state exploitation”[137], whether under the Ottoman, the French, or the Lebanese states. In reality, and given the wave of colonial repression and censorship that shook through South Lebanon in 1936, Muhammad Jabir Āl-Safa vilified, through his criticism of the Ottoman regime, the even more deteriorating economic approach of the *Régie* under the mandate.[138]

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[134] Muhammad Jabir Al Safa, “Safahat min Tarikh Jabal ‘Amil: Jabal ‘Amil Ba’d Zawal al-hukm al-‘Iqta’I”, *al-‘Irfan*, vol. 27 (1937), 385–390.
[135] Svetla Moussakova, Mila Petkov, and Iveta Dimova, *Nouveaux visages de la francophonie en Europe* (Louvain-la-Neuve: Academia-Bruylant, 2008), 43.
[136] Al Safa,a « Safahat », 387.
[137] Chalabi, 21.
[138] Colonialism and corporations have shaken hands for centuries before the ^{c}Amili example. The prime illustration of the blurry line between capitalization on foreign land and direct conquest is the British East Indian company. Many historians considered that British colonialism was established in India in the 16th C. but the Mughal *Shah* in reality remained with political influence until 1858. On corporations and colonialism, see: Samuel G. Ruchman, “Colonial Construction: Labor Practices and Precedents Along the Uganda Railway, 1893–1903,” *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, v. 50, No. 2 (2017): 251-273, and Franz Fanon, *A Dying Colonialism* (New York: Grove Press, 1965).

FIGURE 5: Photographs on tobacco farming in the 1940s. *Caza* of Nabatiyeh.[139]



[140]



Legend: These photographs appear with no legend. The identity of the photographer(s) is unrevealed. The Arabic script was added in the editing process of the photo album.

139 ʻAlī Ḥusayn Mazraʻānī, *al-Nabaṭīyah fī al-dhākirah: 1860-1999 : ṣuwar wa-wathā'iq : 900 ṣūrah wa-wathīqah* (Bayrūt : ʻA.Ḥ. Mazraʻānī, 1999), 243.
140 Manual translation: "The cultivation of tobacco: the burden of the elders and the young".

As Chapter 1 demonstrated, sectarian violence between the Shi^{c}a and the Maronites in the 1918-1920 period does not escape socio-economic reading either. One major social and economic gap between ^{c}Amili Shi^{c}is and Christians revolved around education and literacy. On a larger scale, the Maronites benefited from a French-backed institutionalization of their religious order, which allowed them to negotiate for much power, like in 1861 with the creation of the *mutassarifiyye*. ^{c}Amili Christians, and especially Maronites, were not isolated from their Mount-Lebanese counterparts, and the strong relations between the two widened an already existing gap to the extent where Christian villages with richer infrastructure such as Jezzine and ^{c}Ayn Ebel (before the massacre) became quasi-touristic areas on Jabal ^{c}Amel's scale.

In 1919-20, material difference between Shi^{c}a villages and Christian ones partly fueled the sectarian violence analyzed in Chapter 1. One cannot neglect the direct link between both Sadiq Hamzi and Ad-ham Khanjar's backgrounds and their sectarian violence towards Christian guerrillas and the French. Ad-ham "is from Marwaniyeh, in the caza of Nabatiyeh today (…) his father lost all his fortunes during WWI", and Sadiq "belongs to the old family Al-Saghir but did not benefit from their privileges"[141]. Even in the Christian-dominated *Al-Bashir*, an account of Sadiq Hamzi's states that "Abd Al-Ghani Al-Duh went with his two soldiers to collect the government's money, Sadiq came to meet them. He seized their horses, their money, and their records. He kept the horses for himself, and he redistributed the money to the people who it belonged to by checking the records and threatened the people so that they do not pay the government again".[142] In addition to illustrating the problems around taxation brought up above, this passage foreshadows the economic perspective behind the guerrillas' action, which explains

[141] Jaber, 130-5.
[142] Ibid.

the popular support they had. For the guerillas, the economic dimension superseded anti-colonial, anti-Ottoman, or sectarian anti-Christian action. The choice of Wadi Al-Hujayr as a location for the April 1920 conference instead of Taybeh resulted in a deliberate decision to prevent Kamil Al-Asᶜad from making profit off the village's municipality.[143] Finally, certain sources read the instigation of the ᶜAyn Ebel massacre through this framework of socio-economic gap, putting forth the symbolism of the milk seller as the inferiority of Shiᶜa villages who could not afford milk, in contrast with ᶜAyn Ebel.[144]

FIGURE 6: Photograph of women from Nabatiyeh filling their jars with water in the early 1900s.[145]



Legend: "The women of Nabatiyeh fill their jars from the 'Old Eye of Water [Well]' at the turn of the twentieth century". The identity of the photographed is unrevealed.

[143] Ibid.
[144] Ibid.
[145] ʻAlī Ḥusayn Mazraʻānī, *al-Nabaṭīyah fī al-dhākirah: 1860-1999 : ṣuwar wa-wathāʼiq : 900 ṣūrah wa-wathīqah* (Bayrūt : ʻA.Ḥ. Mazraʻānī, 1999), 220.

It was in light of such inequalities that the Shi^{c}i Shaykh Abdul-Husayn Sadiq revisited the French conquest of South Lebanon as Jabal Lubnan (Mount Lebanon)'s domination over Jabal ^{c}Amel, on all economic, social, and political levels; in his words, "one mountain swallowing another".[146]

Pauperization under colonial administration

The Nieger campaign of collective punishment exacerbated the already evident and widening disparity between ^{c}Amili Shi^{c}is and ^{c}Amili Christians. The heavy fine, the burning of harvests and the damage caused by aerial bombings marked ^{c}Amili economy perpetually and set a precedent for the relationship between the French and the Shi^{c}a. The word *tafqir* (from *faqir* or 'poor', meaning 'pauperization') became the way of characterizing French policy towards South Lebanon.[147] After the proclamation of Greater Lebanon in September 1920, colonial administrators added to the set of taxes that burdened ^{c}Amili peasants a supplementary annual tax that only Shi^{c}i farmers were asked to pay: the *kachlakiyye*, a tax related to animal husbandry. Strong popular opposition against the *kachlakiyye* only rose starting from 1935 according to Colonel Pechkoff's records, as a result of the attitude of resilience and subordination that the Nieger campaign had coerced Southern Shi^{c}as into.[148]

French rule in *South* Lebanon specifically enforced brutal extractions of resources. Documents that justify the annexation of South Lebanon to Greater Lebanon exclusively mentioned its resources, as corroborated by the widespread belief that Greater Lebanese territories could sustain the needs of Mount Lebanon, or the *swallowing mountain*.[149] In 1921, a committee

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[146] Chalabi, *The Shi'is*, 82.
[147] Al-Safa, "Safahat", 385.
[148] MAE-Nantes, Carton #944, Pechkoff, "Note: Situation Politique au Liban-Sud et son evolution, #179," Sidon, April 6, 1936.
[149] MAE-La Courneuve, Carton #46, « La Syrie devant la Conférence de la Paix », Cyrille Moghabghab, Jan. 1919.

was put in charge of browsing how available resources in South Lebanon could be exploited at the service of colonial or other private companies. The committee's records were sent from the mandate state in Lebanon to the metropole, two examples of which are studied below.[150]

The first two examples present private projects of seizing land concessions in South Lebanon at the service of private companies. The first case (Appendix A) concerns the international trade of cotton, oranges, lemons, and other comestible vegetables instead of wheat, which ᶜAmilis usually cultivated alongside tobacco by several Christian agents from Beirut, while the second (Appendix B) concession is said to be put to use for the benefit of the colonial company of the *Crédit Foncier d'Algérie et de Tunisie* whose director of the 'Orient' faction is the French M. Durand. The only time ᶜAmilis are mentioned is when they constituted a labor force. The committee gauged the feasibility of these projects based on their potential profit for the private companies, rather than for the surrounding inhabitants. Therefore, these examples shed light on how the French administration bypassed the local populations in order to impart the resources of South Lebanon. In return, private investments generated private benefits contributing to the development of the capital, or benefits directly related to the French colonial empire in the Mediterranean.[151] Shiᶜi names of private investors rarely appeared in these reports, and if they did, as a later example will demonstrate (Appendix C), it represented an attempt to compensate for the deprivation of resources by the mandate administration.[152]

In archival records, the flagrant gradual deterioration of South Lebanese infrastructures mirrors the misery of the region accurately. Needless to say, the damages caused

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[150] Please refer to appendix A and appendix B respectively for the two examples from the report.
[151] Early private investments were dominated by Christian and/or French agents. The second document's "Mr. DURAND" occupied a high position in one of the largest colonial banks of the French Empire.
[152] Only one example appears in the 1922 report: Youssef El Zein. His example is described in: Chalabi, *The Shi'is*, 125.

by the Nieger campaign were not compensated, and Faysal's Arab government did not contribute to any effort to restore ^{c}Amili restauration.[153] The shock due to both parties' complete abandonment of the newly-made South left a deep mark on the Shi^{c}a psyche, one according to which no one – no French colonial officer, no Christian philanthropic notable or no loyal Syrian supporter of the Arab cause – would defend Jabal ^{c}Amel. A poem by ^{c}Abdul Ra'ouf Mahmoud, a literary man from Shaqra, titled "O Nation of Arabs", was published in the September 1921 issue of *Al-^{c}Irfan* through which the poet, expressing feelings shared by masses in the South, provocatively denounces the "Arabs'" indifference to the violent colonial conquest of Jabal ^{c}Amel.[154] In his poem, ^{c}Abdul Ra'ouf Mahmoud questioned the Arabs who did not show anger in the face of the conquest of Jabal ^{c}Amel: "You're not one of the dignified sons of the Arabs / If anger doesn't flatter you". The contrast opposing the "West" to the "Arabs", and the satirical way in which the Arabs' loss was accounted, both translate ^{c}Amili disappointment in the empty promises of Faysal's partisans. The manual translation of the last two paragraphs of "O Nation of Arabs" by ^{c}Abdul Ra'ouf Mahmoud is provided below.

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[153] Jaber, 164.

[154] One cannot stress enough the importance of poetry for Levantine societies. Each issue from *Al-^{c}Irfan* presented at least five works of poetry by ^{c}Amili poets and at least two article son ^{c}Amili poetry and/or literature. ^{c}Amili thinker Muhammad Rida Sharaf Al-Din published a poem titled "And I have hope" ("ولي امل") in which he emphasized the role of poetry itself:

"وراجعت فني والفنون كثيرة   ولكن فن الشعر فن الملائكِ
تعارف أرواح به وعواطف   على بعد اخلاق لها وممالك"

Manual translation:
"And I revised my art and the arts are numerous / But the art of poetry is the art of angels
Through [it] souls got to know each other, and they uncovered / emotions endowed with morals, and kingdoms"
From *Al-^{c}Irfan*, vol. 27 (July 1937), 400.

"The sons of the western lands have risen with principles
And reached closely to all of what it hoped for

High up the sky has it soared until it discovered
The secrets of the stars and obtained the highest ranks

How many ships have they sailed in the sea
And how many vultures have they flew to toward the clouds

Like *Ababil* birds[155], no messenger in the air
Neither to bring good fortune nor to bring hell war

To knowledge they flocked, sleep has longed you
and they retrieved your long lost glory

You're not one of the dignified sons of the Arabs
If anger doesn't flatter you

For knowledge is the biggest treasure one can benefit from
On the ornaments of fortune signs the ornaments of literature."[156]

From 1925 until 1927, the Syrian Jabal Al-Druze revolt caused an occupation of the entire eastern part of Southern Lebanon (Hasbaya and Nabatiyeh) by Syrian Druze guerilla groups from beyond the border. For two years, French military campaigns and aerial bombings wreaked havoc in the *caza* of Marje^{c}youn, damaging bridges and roads.[157] From 1920 to the early 1930s, floods, cricket invasions, the spread of contagious diseases and the degradation of weak infrastructure like roads filled the pages of the *Bulletin d'Informations Hebdomadaire (BIH)* of the Southern cazas.[158] In addition to not building infrastructure, the mandate administration often abridged existing

155 The *Ababil* birds are a reference to a verse in *Surat Al-Fīl*, from the Holy Qur'an. In this poem, it appears that it was used as a metaphor for aerial bombings. The poise of such a metaphor should be well measured, as it demonstrates the heavy psychological impact of the aerial bombing on Southerners. In fact, Al Safa recorded that the ^{c}Amilis were in shock t the sight of weapons flying from the sky for the first time, during the 1920 campaign.
156 ^{c}Abdul Ra'ouf Mahmoud, in *al-'Irfan*, vol. 7 (1921), 528.
157 MAE-La Courneuve, Carton #190, *Politique interieure 1925-1930*.
158 MAE-Nantes, Carton #1/SL/1/V/1662-1664, *BIH TYR ET MARJEYOUN, 1931-2*.

infrastructure due to lack of revenue; such was the recurring case of municipalities and other public institutions.[159]

In February 1935, Colonel Pechkoff sent a report of weekly updates to the High Commissioner of the Republic in which he argued for more state involvement into South Lebanon: "Residing in a region that even nature disinherited, poor and crushed by taxes, the Shi^{c}i peasant does not see from mandate authorities but the soldiers, the tax collectors, the tariff agent and that of the *Régie*"[160]. One ought to truly fathom how miserable the situation of the colonized must have been and how harrowing the conditions that the mandate authorities imposed upon them must have felt, for the colonial officer to empathize and *plead* for the colonial subjects.[161] This social and economic identity came to define the *Jnoubi*, the Southerner, who lacked in social status and economic power in comparison to his or her neighbors.[162] The 1920-onward socio-economic pauperization of Southern Shi^{c}as became indissociable from their other forms of identification, such as their confessional affiliation and their relationship to the mandate state (their forms of collective action).

The pleading Shi^{c}a and the colonial state

In the first years of the mandate and most of all as a result of the Nieger campaign, the increasingly impoverished region of South Lebanon did not partake in an effort to challenge mandate authorities.[163] Memory of WWI and the 1918-1920 events loomed heavily on the

[159] MAE-Nantes, Carton #1/SL/1/V/1850, *RAPPORT TRIMESTRIEL 1930*.
[160] MAE-Nantes, Carton #1/SL/1/V/1875, *BIH TYR 1935*, « Commandant Pechkoff – Semaine du 23 fevrier au 2 mars ».
[161] The previous time a colonial officer negotiated vis-à-vis mandate authorities for the sake of ^{c}Amili Shi^{c}is was in 1920, when the 150,000 E.L. fine was imposed on Shi^{c}i landowners. For more on this, see: Chalabi, *The Shi'is*, 83.
[162] This birthed a common conviction that the Shi^{c}is were second class citizens by law, which was not necessarily an institutionalized truth, if one does not count a lesser political representation as evidence of such.
[163] MAE-La Courneuve, Carton #190, *Politique interieure 1925-1930*.
Indeed, the Shi^{c}a's lack of involvement in the Jabal Al-Druze revolt (1925-27) was in and of itself a marker of what repertoire of collective action Southern Shi^{c}is reverted to. While Nabatiyeh and Hasbaya had turned into a battlefield between Druze military groups and Senegalese soldiers sent by the French, Shi^{c}a support for the Syrian Unity cause remained minimal, even though the

shoulders of the ^{c}Amili, and the first issue of *Al-^{c}Irfan* post-1914 reveals the shift in attitude from the Shi^{c}as.[164] The issue's introductory page is titled "War and Morals", and its first paragraph includes the following:

> "This large war and great massacre whose fire burned, and whose rage couldn't be extinguished, a general ordeal that we never stopped feeling with each new day, and the elapsed months and years, and if we were to enumerate its damages : the killing of innocent beings, the spoiling of large amounts of money, the swallowing of the weak by the strong, the destruction of inhabited houses, and turning unpopulated lands into desolate ruins.
>
> All of this means nothing compared to what war has done to morality, coming for virtues and damaging them from their stubs, and growing the microbe of the vices, which is the slyest of the sly and the mother of catastrophes and the opener of an era of animosities and misfortunes and here's the statement."[165]

The haunting memory of the war, and of the "massacres" more particularly, the simultaneous subtlety in the writing style, and the incisiveness of the last sentence all converge to demonstrate that Jabal ^{c}Amel lost on all fronts. In his introductory paragraph – of high significance, the author – Shaykh Ahmad ^{c}Aref Al-Zayn – also founder of the Journal and member of the ^{c}Amili Trio, focused on "*akhlaq*" (morals), more specifically how war held a negative impact on people's morals, referring to animosity from all sides: the Shi^{c}a guerrillas, the Christian ones, and the French merciless campaign. This reveals a shift towards the search for an identity and an internal movement placing the Shi^{c}a at the center[166]; the reasoning of Shi^{c}i thinkers could be summarized

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instigation of the Syrian revolt found its origins in the public execution of Ad-ham Khanjar who kept shelter in Sultan Al-Attrach's circles in Hawran (modern-day Syria). See: Jaber, "Pouvoir", 162.

[164] The journal issue appeared in March 1921, after several years of interruption starting from 1914.

[165] *Al-'Irfan*, vol. 7 (1921), 98.

[166] The question that ensued was: who is the ^{c}Amili Shi^{c}i? The process of negotiating identity, as examples from the next pages show, inscribe into the process of re-inventing the Shi^{c}i identity on the spot to gain credibility in the Lebanese mosaic. For theory on colonial re-invention of tradition, see: Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition*, (Cambridge, UK and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983) and Bernard Cohn, *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge: the British in India*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996. For an interesting example similar to the ^{c}Amili case, see: Bruce Maddy-Weitzman, "Contested Identities: Berbers, "Berberism" and the State in North Africa", *The Journal of North African Studies* 6, no. 3 (September 2001), 28.

as the following: outside of Faysal's framework of Syrian unity, and in the context of the Lebanese mosaic, what position did the Shi^{c}a have and what defined them within the newly formed nation?

In comparison with the other confessional groups, Shi^{c}i intellectuals realized that the Shi^{c}a were disadvantaged on the overall Lebanese scene, whether as an elite – who could only voice their concerns on a national level through their subordinate links to Saida's Sunni elite and more specifically the Sulh family – or as popular masses, regarded as backwards. The early years of the mandate were thus characterized by intense politics of demand, or what has earned in Arabic the name: *matlabiyya*.

The word *matlabiyya* comes from the Arabic root *talaba* (meaning to ask; its derivative is *matalib*, meaning request), and has come to mean the concept of revindicating, advocating, demanding rights. *Matlabiyya* defines a direct relationship between the people and the authority that rules them, in this case Southern Shi^{c}as and the mandate state. Already under strict Hamidian rule, coastal Lebanon had already internalized the practice of *matlabiyya* by pleading their cause vis-à-vis the *mutassarif*, the *vali* or local *pasha*s.[167] Indeed, *matlabiyya* was not a product of the Shi^{c}is, but rather a repertoire of action borrowed at times by those in need. The *mazbata* practice rose in Christian circles who insisted on the democratic character of their demands.[168] What is particular to early mandate Shi^{c}i *matlabiyya* was the frequency of its use due to the constant neglect of mandate authorities towards Jabal ^{c}Amel. Nantes's foreign affairs archives contain multiple files and boxes titled "Revendications Chiites" and "Fonctionnaires Chiites" encapsulating the countless Shi^{c}i *matalib* sent by individuals, groups of people of politicians themselves. Such name

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[167] Weiss, *Shadow*, 59. For more, see: Chalabi, *The Shi'is*, 114-6.

[168] A *mazbata* presented who voted for the demand, and in certain instance, who voted against. Tamara Chalabi argues for a case where one could consider that Shi^{c}i *matlabiyya* started in 1870 under Al-Jazzar. See: Chalabi, *The Shi'is*, 117.

branding does not appear in the case of other groups, thus foreshadowing the unique character of the Shi^ci use of *matlabiyya*.

What made a '*revendication*' specifically Shiᶜi by nature? Naturally, it was presented by someone from the Shiᶜi community. "The Shiᶜi community during the Mandate period should be considered within the framework of an emerging rural community entering Lebanese history. It is a peripheral community with a substantial percentage of illiteracy, on an uneven footing with the two other main communities, the Maronites and the Sunnis"[169]; ᶜAmili petitions were unique in that they were "demanding the basics of development, such as schools, water, roads, employment, and tax reductions"[170].[171]

Early mandate Shiᶜi *matlabiyya* consisted in a repertoire of collective action. *Matlabiyya* was a practice of demanding, and the more the Shiᶜis practiced *matlabiyya* – meaning the more the French neglected them and left them no choice but to keep revindicating – the more the image of the poor neglected Shiᶜi peasant was reinforced and confirmed. The main repertoire of action that Shiᶜi *matlabiyya* invoked consisted in petitions and press.[172] Thus, already in December 1921, a group of *ᶜUlema* sent a petition to the High Commissioner of the High Republic – then still General Gouraud – the Southern administrator Commandant Trabaud, as well as the Lebanese *mutassarif* (regional governor) of the three Southern *caza*, the Druze Tawfiq Arslan and his advisor Albert Shidyaq. The text of the petition included the following:

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[169] Chalabi, *The Shi'is*, 117.
[170] Ibid.
171 This did not exclude Christian Orthodox matlabiyya to converge with Shici requests, thus contributing to a larger cAmili practice of matlabiyya. However, these cases remained exceptional, the most marking and influential of which was Alfred Abu Samra, a Greek Orthodox notable from Marjecyoun who founded the journal Al-Qalam Al-Sarih, specialized in challenging French attitude towards the South, and their Orientalist understanding of inter-religious collaboration. For more, see: Chalabi, *The Shi'is*, 120; and Malek Abisaab, "Shiite Peasants and a New Nation in Colonial Lebanon: The Intifada of Bint Jubayl, 1936," CSSAAME Vol. 29, No. 3 (2009), 496.
[172] The war of petitions between Faysal and the French – and specifically French effort through the spread of associations to incite ᶜAmili Shiᶜis to sign pro-mandate petitions – set the idea that mandate authorities are receptive to petitions as a form of demanding rights.

> "They [the Shi'i] form the largest or second largest group of the inhabitants of the Grand Liban, and they pay nearly fifty percent of taxes, and despite this, the benefits go to others and the burden goes to them. There is not a single Amili civil servant in the capital. There are also very few in their district of South Lebanon for no justifiable reason. The state of education , the condition of the roads is very poor given what they [The 'Amilis] pay in terms of taxes. The increase in taxes is extortionate and cannot be supported by the state of the country [Jabal 'Amil]. The wrongdoings of a few ignorant have become the burden of the many innocent [this is in reference to the fines imposed by the French following the Christian massacres in May 1920]. Mercy for justice and equality because the 'Amili people, is a vigorous people with beneficence in their hearts."[173]

The petition found its way into *Al-^{c}Irfan*'s issue in the same month, thus mutually highlighting the relevance of both press and petitions. *Al-^{c}Irfan* holds its own exceptional influence, being the main ^{c}Amili and Shi^{c}a journal, housed in Saida, and surviving WWI unlike its other counterparts. The importance of *Al-^{c}Irfan*'s first issue after the war cannot be exaggerated. The previous discussion on this issue mentioned that the introductory pages stressed the inward thinking expressed by Shaykh Ahmad ^{c}Aref Al-Zayn.[174] His persistence on "morals" could be explained by the utmost importance he granted to education, which conflated to the main Shi^{c}i elite understanding of education and its ability to activate social mobility for the then-majorly illiterate Shi^{c}i bloc. In the past passage, *Al-^{c}Irfan*'s introduction performed as a *matlab* (a demand), a tool in the box of *matlabiyya*, through press this time. Not only did Al-Zayn employ *matlabiyya*, but he encouraged his contemporaries to do the same by ending his powerful note with: "[the lack of development in the South] comprises of many tails, and cannot be treated with precipitation, but hopefully some of our social writers grant the topic the justice it deserves, and peace be upon all"[175].

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[173] *Al-'Irfan*, vol. 7, no. 3 (1921), 578.
[174] In this same introduction, he interrogates "Tell me, on your God, how many, oh how many people benefitted from this war [1914-1920] and made money out of it, at the expense of those who died and starved (…) Where are the builders of schools, where are those who gave life to institutions and institutes? Where are those who helped the miserable, and established shelters and hospitals? Where are those thanks to whom the useful pages rose, and those who published useful books? Where are those who opened universities and fought the manners of perversion and corruption?" (See: *Al-'Irfan*, vol. 7, no1 (1921), 98).
[175] Ibid.

Matlabiyya became part of the identity of being a Southern Shi^{c}i.[176] If not by personally writing, peasants complained about the lack of infrastructure and state involvement to the *a^{c}yan*, the *mukhtar* (mayor) and the *wujaha'* who benefited from even larger circles of influences with the power vacuum caused by Kamil Al-As^{c}ad's forced fleeing to Palestine.[177] In certain cases, they came as direct responses to colonial policy: a couple of months after the resource report commanded in 1922, a petition was signed and presented by "the inhabitant of Jabal ^{c}Amel" to lay out the economic and mostly agricultural issues in the region, stressing on the unjust system of taxation and "urging Gouraud to treat Jabal ^{c}Amel and Mount Lebanon equally"[178]. What stands out to be most relevant in discussing sectarianization in the 1920-1930 period is the formation of a non-religious identity that followed confessional lines: the Shi^{c}a identity did not limit itself to religious belief and practice; it included a socio-economic upbringing and a position of constant pleading that Shaykh ^{c}Aref Al-Zayn alluded to through his concept of "the social writers"[179].

In fact, since only the Shi^{c}i seemed to be helping his/her fellow Shi^{c}i, the performed effect of such *matlabiyya* was no other than the strengthening of confessional loyalties from lower class Shi^{c}is towards upper class Shi^{c}is.[180] Confessional loyalties acted as an embryotic form of clientelism.[181] Youssef Bey Al-Zayn became a prime example of a notable who attracted a circle of confessional loyalties. As shown in the following excerpt (APPENDIX C)[182] from the previously mentioned Committee's report, he seized the first opportunity to negotiate with French

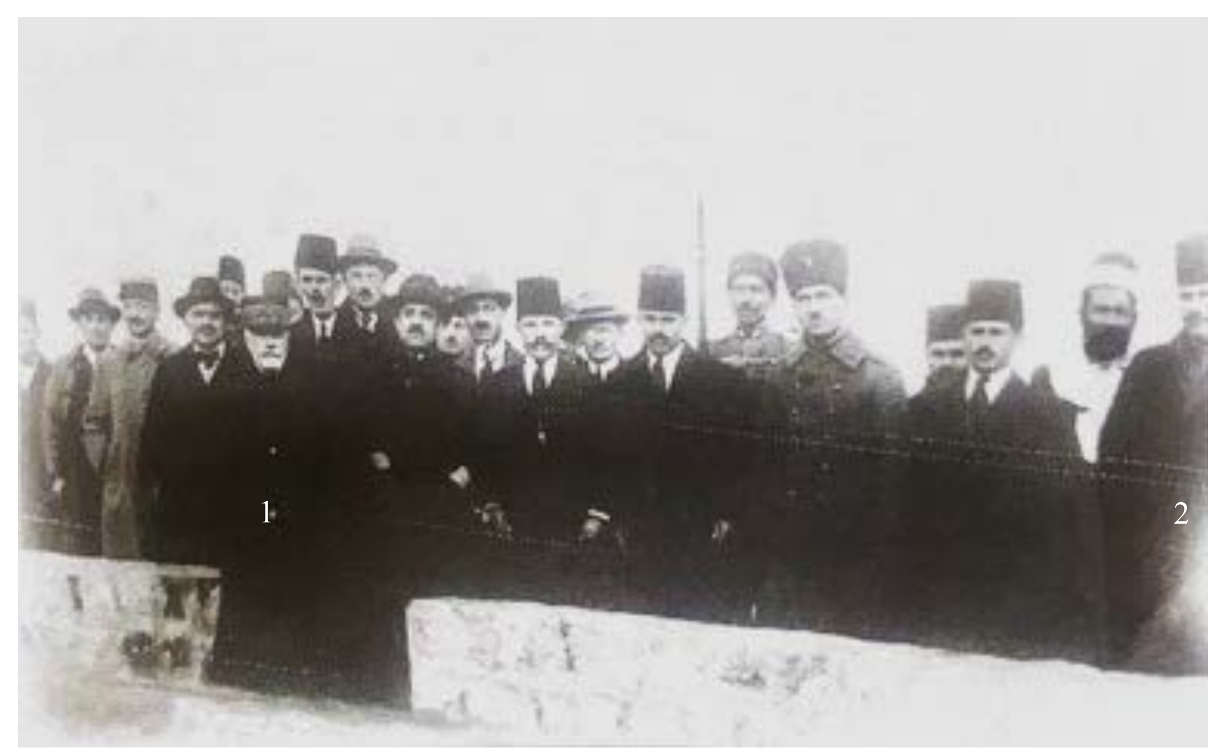
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[176] It is unproductive to quote and analyze all instances of *matlabiyya* in order to demonstrate that it was a part of who the Shi^{c}a had become as Southern Lebanese citizens; the examples are indenumerable.
[177] Chalabi, *The Shi'is*, 117.
[178] Ibid, 121.
[179] *Al-'Irfan*, vol. 7, no1 (1921), 99.
[180] Tamara Chalabi expands on this point when dealing with parliamentary *matlabiyya*, but confessional loyalties existed prior to the institutionalization of sectarianism in the 1926 Constitution.
[181] Clientelism developed already during the WWI famine whereby the monopolization of resources by traditional leaders and notables perpetuated sectarian tropes in Mount-Lebanon. ^{c}Amili Shi^{c}is inherited from this practice during the mandate period when South Lebanon experienced severe impoverishment.
[182] Please refer to appendix C for the report on Youssef Bey Al-Zayn's proposal.

authorities in order to build an infrastructure that brings potable water to Nabatiyeh, one of the major cities of Jabal ^{c}Amel, and its surroundings. The project, referred to in Arabic sources as the Litani Project, was subject to close but enthusiastic examination by ^{c}Amili writers who saw in Youssef Bey Al-Zayn the figure of a ^{c}Amili notable who dedicated his economic activities to the betterment of Jabal ^{c}Amel's condition, rather than to the exclusive private accumulation of profit. Not only did instances of confessional solidarity such as the Litani project reinforce the sectarian trope of 'only the Shi^{c}i would help the Shi^{c}i', but they also allowed for Shi^{c}i notables to capitalize on infrastructural projects and expand their clientelist network. Indeed, although it was inaugurated on the 24th of December 1924, ^{c}Amili peasants continuously complained about the underwhelming results of the Litani project until the infrastructure's renovation in celebration of the May 2000 liberation from Israeli occupation. Meanwhile, during the decades of the mandate, French Colonel Pechkoff denounced Youssef Bey Al-Zayn's rather empty promises towards Southerners, but his criticism should be taken with a grain of salt since French authorities systematically loathed Youssef Bey Al-Zayn for his popular support in Saida and in the ^{c}Amili hinterland.[183] Sectarian loyalties and thereby growing sectarian identities grew around these exact clientelist circles, of which Youssef Bey Al-Zayn constitutes one mere example.

[183] Youssef Bey Al-Zayn became one of the five Southern representatives in the Council of Representation (proto-Parliament) in 1923, and continuously picked on the French's neglect of the South. Youssef Bey Al-Zayn, unlike Abdel-Latif Al-As^{c}ad for example - Kamil Bey Al-As^{c}ad's son - did not comply by the usual network of notables and religious leaders that mandate authorities sought to hold a certain level of control over.

FIGURE 7: Photograph from the inauguration the Nahr el Taseh irrigation system.[184]



Legend: *"Inauguration of the "Nab^{c} Al-Tasah" water pumping system to the cistern of Kafar Rouman and from there, to Nabatiyeh, at the initiative of Youssef Bek Al-Zayn. With the presence of the military commandant of Greater Lebanon, the General Vandenberg, and other French and Lebanese officials (28 December 1924)."*[185] *The man indicated by the number (1) is the General Vandenberg. Youssef Bey Al-Zayn is annotated with the number (2). The identity of the photographer is unrevealed.*

The social identity of negotiating religious identity

Finally, the case for education in Shi^{c}i *matlabiyya* deserves more attention. While concerns of infrastructure and taxation recurrently made it into the *matalib* (plural of *matlab*, i.e. demand), actors of the politic of demands did not stop insisting on education, noting that the conception of education that vehiculated in early mandate years included teaching religion and its practices.[186]

[184] ʻAlī Ḥusayn Mazraʻānī, *al-Nabaṭīyah fī al-dhākirah: 1860-1999 : ṣuwar wa-wathā'iq : 900 ṣūrah wa-wathīqah* (Bayrūt : ʻA.Ḥ. Mazraʻānī, 1999), 57.
[185] The quoted legend was part of Mazraʻānī's comments on the picture.
[186] Indeed, before the mandate, pre-higher education schools were mostly attached to a religious *waqf*. The mandate did not apply *laïcité* – a French extreme version of secularism – in a strictly rigorous way in Lebanon, especially in schools. But they also

Therefore, in addition to negotiating basic needs, the social identity of being Shiᶜa became defined by a process of negotiating education – and through education, religious identity – in an active comparison with other sectarian groups: the Shiᶜa had very few educational spaces in which they teach the Shiᶜa youth about their history, their confession and their religious practices. This section explores how Shiᶜi strictly religious identity and Shiᶜi socio-economic identity entangled to produce sectarian behavior.

Demand for education vis-à-vis the mandate appeared explicitly in *Al-ᶜIrfan*'s September 1921 issue where a section titled "The most important events and opinions"[187] incorporated a paragraph under the topic "*Schools*" where the author complained about the lack of professors, lack of personnel, lack of public educational institution and most of all, lack of money for the families to teach their children. Another paragraph under the topic "The Shiᶜa and schools" repeated the complaint on the lack of public schools. But the editor did not stop at the act of pleading vis-à-vis the audience, which included mandate authorities, but also undertook the initiative to call for action: "So get to work, get to work. Let's end our hesitation and our laziness, and regarding the ᶜAmilites, they sleep right after waking up, which explains why nobody helped Al-Haj Husseyn and Yusuf Bek Al-Zeyn when they built five new rooms in the school of Nabatiyeh"[188]. Starting from 1923, a new section within the "The most important events and opinions" part was added, and its title "Some of the ᶜAmilis' desires" encompassed the spirit of *matlabiyya*. The first line of this section remained the exact same for each iteration: "O Your Greatness", designating the audience: the High Commissioner. And in each issue, education

did not intervene in the building of any state-sponsored higher education structure, leaving space for each confessional group to entangle both religious teachings and academics.

[187] *Al-'Irfan*, vol. 7, no3 (1921), 471.

[188] Ibid.

unexceptionally filled at least five lines of this section, with a focus on primary education, and most of all on the infrastructure of public schools.

As explained previously, education was of particular significance because of, on the one hand, the considerable disparity that existed between Shi^{c}i towns and Christian towns, and between South Lebanon and the rest of the newly formed territory. On the other hand, education participated in the raising of kids, and the making of future adults, and the perpetuation of "good morals" (*al-akhlaq*). Southern Shi^{c}is entered a phase of citizen-building, and public instruction was interlinked with education and the home, including what revolved around religious beliefs and practices. In that regard, schools were of extreme significance, but press too, and the journal *Al-^{c}Irfan* perfectly reflects the new concern of ^{c}Amili Shi^{c}is to learn about their beliefs and to publicly affirm their Shi^{c}ism for the first time.

Journals, and *Al-^{c}Irfan* in particular, converted into a place of teaching about what it meant to be Shi^{c}a, in strictly religious terms. In *Al-^{c}Irfan*'s early mandate issues, certain entries *explained* what Shi^{c}i beliefs consisted of. The October 1922 issue, published during the Hijri month of Safar[189], included a section informing the reader of what *Yawm Al-Ghadir* and *^{c}Ashoura'* represented[190]. The journal was undeniably directed towards a Shi^{c}i audience, to which it explained the principles of *being and acting Shi^{c}a*.[191] *Al-^{c}Irfan*'s teaching of a newly debated and crafted Shi^{c}a culture and its practices[192] confirms what that "the years 1920-1926 were dynamic for ^{c}Amili integration as far as laying out the model for their political maneuverings was concerned"[193].

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[189] Safar is a month of utmost importance for the Shi^{c}a. While ^{c}Ashoura' (the ten days of the siege and Battle of Kerbala) occur during the first ten days of Muharram, both Muharram and Safar are considered months of mourning the death of Imam Husayn and Ahlul-Bayt for Twelver Shi^{c}is.
[190] *Al-'Irfan*, vol. 7, no4 (1921), 587.
[191] The *^{c}Ashoura* debates and their analysis through the framework of modernity have filled the pages of Max Weiss's third chapter, who drew a thorough image of the decisive conversation, with interesting conclusions.
[192] For more information about *^{c}Ashoura* and other examples of Shi^{c}a practices debated and re-invented during the mandate period, see footnote 166.
[193] Chalabi, *The Shi'is*, 122.

In the new Lebanon, the socio-economic reality of the “impoverished Shi^{c}a peasant” and the consequent use of the *matlabiyya* repertoire came all together with the concern for teaching the newly crafted religious identity. By the end of the 1930s, there existed a very specific delineation of the Shi^{c}a citizen, who presented particularities on all levels of his/her identity in contrast with any other group. No other confessional group simultaneously shared his/her social class, relationship vis-à-vis political authorities *and* religious journey. Thus, in the Shi^{c}a’s perception of themselves in relation to others, a Shi^{c}a citizen shared more with any other Shi^{c}a citizen than with a citizen from a different confessional group. At such level, it would be judicious to consider that a Shi^{c}a sect was born, from external as well as internal dynamics.

The result of the production of the Shi^{c}a sect crystallized and found strength in a public demand (*matlab*) issued in 1925 for their own court, separated from the Sunni (Hanafi) court, and for the recognition of their Islamic school of law, the *Ja^{c}fari madhhab,* as an independent school. The next chapter builds off of this example to finalize the claim that *matlabiyya* is interlinked with the creation of a sectarian identity.

In Chapter 1, my work focused on a sectarianization process ranging from 1918 to 1920 and including sectarian violence of all forms. This process was characterized by a narrowing external reading of the ^{c}Amili bloc as an exclusively Shi^{c}i sectarian entity, by the rushed emergence of a Shi^{c}i political movement across classes as well as by the violence of persecution, massacre, and colonial collective punishment. French military strategies acted as a dividing force, forever anchoring in the memory of ^{c}Amilis the sectarian line between the Shi^{c}i and the Christian.

Chapter 2 examined the immediate aftermath of the Nieger Campaign, whereby the Shi^{c}a were coerced into integration within Greater Lebanon. The 1920-1930s period saw the marginalization of the Shi^{c}a as belonging to a neglected social class of impoverished peasants. The

response to this socio-economic reality, created and entertained by mandate policies, took the shape of a repertoire of collective action that the Shiᶜa utilized uniquely. In addition to the image of the perpetually pleading impoverished peasant, Southern Shiᶜis seeking education as a basic need attempted in this period to understand what their main external mode of identification meant: 'who is the Shiᶜa? what are his/her beliefs? what are his/her practices'. In this context, the politics of demand quickly entangled with the politics of crafting an identity, and the negotiation for education gave birth to a process of negotiating for religious identity; such was enacted *matlabiyya* for the *Jaᶜfari* court.[194] Where, in chapter 1, being sectarian appeared as a transient moment affecting different parts of the ᶜAmili population at different levels, the latter chapter covered a process of a more horizontal sectarianization by which a *conscience de secte* emerged in the lower as well as in the upper layers of Southern society as a result of the specific repressive way in which mandate authorities approached the South.

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[194] Ibid.

Chapter 3:
Matlabiyya and the *Ja^{c}fari* court in the shadow of colonial rule

As was shown in the previous chapter, the pauperization of South Lebanon gave the category of 'Shi^{c}i' a social and economic dimension, in addition to the religious and geographical realities it already encompassed. *Matlabiyya* as a political repertoire of collective action participated in solidifying this identification. So far, evidence for the sectarianization of the Shi^{c}a applied to the 1918-1925 chronological scope, before the creation of institutions imposing sectarian legal systems. This thesis holds the aim of diverting colonialism studies, especially those on sectarianization, from the legalist framework historians align with. In this chapter, I argue that the creation of the Ja^{c}fari court was a Shi^{c}i *matlab*, an act of *matlabiyya*, but one that the French had already anticipated and that they aligned with their colonial interests.

Social dynamics fueled and orchestrated by very strategic colonial policies and approaches towards the South pushed the Shi^{c}a to advocate for a court of their own confession, thus showing the depart from the Muslim bloc as a whole, and the desire of a well-educated elite of intellectuals, notables, and religious leaders to concretize the Shi^{c}i sect. This goes against the dynamic that Max Weiss engaged with, which places the law as the first and foremost sectarianizing machine, rather than as the first and foremost manifestation of an already set-in-train sectarianization.

This chapter is not demonstrating that the Shi^{c}a became sectarian merely because the French gave them the space and the opportunity to. Quite the opposite, it rather carefully shows how the mandate administration orchestrated the stretching of Shi^{c}i *matlabiyya* to its limits, and selectively fulfilled the specific revindicated reforms that fit its sectarianizing agenda.

The context for that is the 1921 census and its consequences on the French's colonial policy towards Lebanon. In April 1921, the French administration received the results of a census that had started from the moment Greater Lebanon's borders were agreed upon with the British in November 1920.[196] The census recorded the presence of 327,267 Christians and 273,366 Muslims, a gap that surprised both French officials and Christians. For the intended project of Greater Lebanon, which was set out to be a majorly Christian-inhabited state acting as the shelter of Christians in the Orient, the gap was considered too narrow. From 1921 to 1923, the French actively endeavored in enlarging the Lebanese Christian community by settling the persecuted Armenians of Anatolia in Beirut.[197] But the main reason for the narrowness of the gap was the very high number of Shi^cis, which the colonial administration had not expected. Of the 273,366 Muslims, nearly 105,000 were Shi^cis. Starting directly from 1921, discussions on the detachment of the South occupied exchanges between colonial officers until 1925. Robert de Caix, the second High Commissioner of the Republic, envisaged several options to solve the issue, even including conceding Jabal ^cAmel to the British mandate in Palestine. For colonial rivalry between the French and the British to dissipate in the face of a territorial and demographical dilemma, one must try to fathom the alarming urgency of this matter. However, during the mandate, the South did not eventually change sides, because the resources of the land and river of Jabal ^cAmel were of undeniable importance for the economic survival of Mount-Lebanon and Beirut altogether.[198]

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[196] MAE-La Courneuve, Carton #34, *Dossier Politique Generale*, « Tableau statistique indiquant la population du Grand Liban par rites et par cazas », Avril 1922.

[197] Boustani, 306-309. In MAE-Nantes, Carton #1/SL/1/V/1875, *BIH TYR 1935*, « Commandant Pechkoff – Semaine du 23 fevrier au 2 mars », Colonel Pechkoff records Shaykh ^cAref Al-Zayn's complaint that Armenians participated in the Christian colonization of Lebanon.

[198] A meticulous analysis of the 1919-1921 issues of the *Revue Phenicienne* - which lies outside of this scope of this paper per se - shows that there existed contention between the revindications of Beirut-based Maronite notables to create a strictly majorly Christian country, and what the High Commissioner envisioned in terms of ruling over Lebanese society. One possible conclusion is that the High Commissioner purposefully did not ensure a Christian majority in order for the Christian majority not to unify and petition for independence as early as a couple of years into the mandate. The dividing policy thus does not simply target the Shi^ca, but rather every faction of Lebanese society that was susceptible to overthrow the colonial state. This conclusion overlaps with the argument of this thesis, according to which French direct and indirect policies of sectarianization were designed at the service of a larger dividing campaign.

With this context, the following sections work on showing that the resolving colonial policy in the face of the latter issue resulted in the weakening of the Muslim bloc through its segmentation, a goal that sectarianism fulfilled perfectly.

The history of the Ja^{c}fari school and of its recognition in Greater Lebanon

The Ja^{c}fari madhhab (or Ja^{c}fari school) first emerged in Persia after the Safavid dynasty took control of the Empire in 1501. Although he was not the first Shi^{c}i ruler of Persia, the rise to power of Shah Isma^{c}il I was accompanied with his desire to make Twelver Shi^{c}ism the official religion of the Persian Empire.[199] The development of the Ja^{c}fari madhhab thus occurred in the political context of consolidating the Safavid dynasty, and since the early years of the new dynasty's rule, Shi^{c}i scholars were brought from Jabal ^{c}Amel to share their knowledge of Shi^{c}i fiqh and to help consolidate the Ja^{c}fari madhhab into an institutional school of thought, similar to the four Sunni schools.[200]

By 1920, the Shi^{c}a of the former Ottoman Empire had been practicing Hanafi law[201] as had done the rest of the Empire.[202] In the case of Greater Syria, the Shi^{c}a had developed underground and indirect ways through which they could informally incorporate Ja^{c}fari legal thought – although very little – in Hanafi courts through the agency of the *qadi* (judge) and the *na'ib qadi* (adjoint judge) when they happened to be Shi^{c}a.[203] As *qadis* were appointed from close to the court where

[199] Moojan Momen, *An introduction to Shi'i Islam : the history and doctrines of Twelver Shi'ism* (Oxford: G. Ronald, 1985), 127.
[200] Ruda Jurdi Abisaab, "Iran and Pre-Independence Lebanon" in Houchang Esfandiar Chehabi, *Distant Relations: Iran and Lebanon in the Last 500 Years* (I.B. Tauris, 2006), 76. The early 1920s discussion on the creation of a Ja^{c}fari madhhab and court in Lebanon did not seem to recall with great importance the transfer of scholars from Jabal ^{c}Amel to Persia, nor did it seem to claim the prestige of ^{c}Amili scholars in the pre-modern era.
[201] Four Islamic legal schools of thought existed by 1920: Hanafi, Shafi^{c}i, Hanbali and Maliki schools or *madhhab*s.
[202] Weiss, 103.
[203] Hanafi and Ja^{c}fari legal thought are not based on the same corpus of texts. The major source difference is the Hadith that each use. Methods are also a source of contention between the two schools: *ijma^{c}* or consensus is practiced in Hanafi legislation but not in the Ja^{c}fari tradition. The differing results, in terms of law, are often narrowed to inheritance law, law sexual practice and the sacralization of the body. Supposedly because Ja^{c}fari tradition granted a larger fraction of inherited wealth to women than Hanafi tradition, French officials considered that the Ja^{c}fari school was less backwards. This of course inscribes into French colonial strategies of dividing the Muslim community, which the rest of the chapter develops further on.

they applied Shari^{c}ah, the courts of Marje^{c}youn and Sour in Jabal ^{c}Amel were often staffed with a Shi^{c}i *qadi*. Moreover, the practice of Ja^{c}fari law in private homes also developed throughout the last two centuries of the empire.[204] This all however remained marginal and unofficial, and the largest part of ^{c}Amili Shi^{c}is were subject to Hanafi law by *taqiyya*, a principle in Shi^{c}i tradition that developed under the Abbasid caliphate, allowing one to apply the rules – and thus, abide by the law – of the major religious group of his/her environment for reasons of security.[205] Such practice birthed the confusion between the terminologies Shi^{c}i (or Shi^{c}a) and Metwalli, the latter emerging in the Levantine coast to designate the Shi^{c}a and sometimes other groups of similarly low socio-economic rank.

Such remained the case until 1920, after which informal Shi^{c}i law increased in practice and the use of *taqiyya* gradually waned. Indeed, the Shi^{c}a shaykh (equivalent of a Sunni imam in Ja^{c}fari terminology) Munir ^{c}Useyran cited a certain "decree from the state of Greater Lebanon issued on September 11, 1921, which stipulated that the Shi^{c}a must seek counsel with the Shi^{c}i qadi in adjudicating all issues concerning personal matters."[206] In fact, similarly to other post-Ottoman states, the practice of Shari^{c}ah only concerned certain areas of personal status (*al-'ahwal al-shakhsiyya*[207]) as a consequence of the *Qanun*-ization and the 1917 Ottoman Law.[208] The Lebanese state was no exception to the predicament imposed by colonial states upon the Muslim world. In 1924, Muslims bore witness of the abolition of the Caliphate, and on January 30th, 1926, Henri de Jouvenel, the High Commissioner of the French Republic in Greater Lebanon and Syria signed *Arrêté #3503*, thus formally recognizing the *Ja^{c}fari madhhab* as a legitimate Shari^{c}ah school and jurisprudence. The *Arrêté* entailed the creation of the position of "*qadi Ja^{c}fari*", and of the

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[204] Ibid, 103.
[205] Tamara Chalabi, *The Shi'is of Jabal Amel and the New Lebanon* (New York: 2006), 104.
[206] MAE-Nantes, Carton #454, "Déclaration du Cheikh Mounir Asseyran sur l'autonomie des juridictions chiites," May 17, 1934.
[207] Jamal Nasir, *The Islamic Law of Personal Status* (The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 2002), 34.
[208] Wael Hallaq, *Sharīʿa: Theory, Practice, Transformations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 455.

institution of the “*Ja^{c}fari* court” (of first resort – *Tribunaux de Première Instance* or *al-mahakim al-bida’iyya* – and higher resort – *Cour d’Appel* or *mahkamat al-tamyiz* in Beirut).[209]

The recognition of the Ja^{c}fari madhhab and its *mahkama* cannot be narrowed to *Arrêté #3503*. For the legal situation of the Lebanese Shi^{c}a, any decree on Personal Status meant a reconfiguration of the new institution. From 1926 until 1939, the mandate policy on personal status law kept fluctuating in extreme ways, thus altering the significance and role of the *Ja^{c}fari* courts. Although the May 1926 constitution stipulated the “guarantee of personal status”, an *Arrêté* later limited jurisdiction on personal status, and was suspended then abridged following popular uprising from all sectarian communities (*tawa’if* or طوائف, pl. of *ta’ifa* or طائفة).[210] In 1936, the promulgation of the *Traité Franco-Libanais* separated the state of Greater Lebanon from that of the five Syrian provinces, opening doors for the reconfiguration of personal status. From March 1936 to November 1938, after an attempt at institutionalizing the *tawa’if* and their respective sovereignty over matters of personal status, legal chaos haunted the mandate administration and the Lebanese government. The institutionalization of personal status through the 1936 *Lois des communautés* formalized a distinction between Lebanese *Shi^{c}i*s and *Sunni*s. As a result, in the eyes of the law, a Sunni Lebanese would differ from a Shi^{c}a Lebanese in the same way he/she would differ from a Maronite citizen or a Lebanese Jewish citizen.

The core effect of the 1936 sectarian law perdured despite several instances of editing.[211] Simultaneously but also consequently, the 1936-1939 period consisted in a moment of crisis for the institution of the Ja^{c}fari court, as a project of unification of Ja^{c}fari and Hanafi court into one court (Shari^{c}ah court or “*tribunal chérieh*”) was being discussed, however amounting to no

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[209] “^{c}An Al- Madhhab Al-Ja‘fari,” *al-Jarida al-Lubnaniyya al-rasmiyya* (February 12, 1926).
[210] Weiss, 110.
[211] Ibid, 118.

change.[212] The status of the Ja^{c}fari *madhhab* as an official and legitimate school of thought, on the other hand, did not undergo any discussion on a potential reform. By December 1939, the Ja^{c}fari court appeared as a consolidated institution that had surmounted three years of possible dissolution.

Even though reforming the Ja^{c}fari court would remain a preoccupation of the mandate state until its demise in 1946, its existence as an established institution would not be questioned anymore. For this reason, historians consider that post-1939, the Ja^{c}fari court entered a new phase, that of reform, rather than establishment.

Who were the Lebanese Shi^{c}a by 1924?

The previous chapter concludes with the confectioning of a Shi^{c}a image by the end of the 1920s. By 1924, ^{c}Amili Shi^{c}is had been crushed by the extremely violent 1918-20 war, the policy of collective punishment imposing an additional tax on ^{c}Amili Shi^{c}i peasants, and the perpetual pauperization of the South that stemmed from colonial approach of resource exploitation towards the South. The 1920s thus saw Shi^{c}is getting frustrated and disappointed time after time, by the belittlement and/or the violence of their Christian neighbors, the French, the Arab nationalism movement and non-Shi^{c}a Lebanese not advocating for the South's cause. In this particular context of deception, the Shi^{c}is turn to the other Arab lands where they realized that their Iraqi counterparts were not under the same plight as them. This section builds a bridge between the search for intra-Shi^{c}i comparison and inclusion, and the demand for the application of Ja^{c}fari jurisprudence.

Starting from 1921, *Al-^{c}Irfan*, the main ^{c}Amili Shi^{c}i press, started dedicating several articles per issue to a topic related to Iraq, and to a lesser but increasing extent, Iran (and to an even lesser extent, Azerbaijan, all three states hosting a significant Twelver Shi^{c}i population). Starting from

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[212] Ibid, 124.

January 1924, both countries were dedicated a paragraph of the "Ahamm al-'akhbar wa-al-'ara'" section, meaning 'The most important news and opinions'. Other articles varied from historical studies to comments on contemporary events and religious studies. In the first 1924 issue for example, a poem titled "Between Al-Sham and Al-Iraq",[213] and in the third issue, an article titled "Revolutions and the two revolutions of Najaf" illustrate the closer attention that is paid to Iraq.[214] In the fourth 1925 issue, a 13-page article is dedicated to the history of Iran, with a great emphasis on the post-Safavid period.[215] Such publications actively sought to make comparisons between the state of Shi^{c}ism in Iraq and Iran and its obvious underdevelopment in the geographically limited area of Jabal ^{c}Amel. The history of Iran article, for instance, recalled the grandeur of Jabal ^{c}Amel under the late Safavid period, a time where ^{c}Amili religious thinkers were called upon by the Safavid dynasty to refine the Ja^{c}fari madhhab. The narrative according to which the ^{c}Amilis belonged to Shi^{c}ism and Shi^{c}ism belonged to Jabal ^{c}Amel found increasing amplitude and appeal in the press. The image of the miserable Metwali that often did not perceive themselves as Shi^{c}i *per se* was no longer. Chapter 2 gave the alternative example of the discussion of *^{c}Ashoura*, for instance, a conversation that sparked active comparisons between Jabal ^{c}Amel, Persia, and the Iraqi practices of *^{c}Ashoura*.

More importantly, in the January 1924 issue of *Al-^{c}Irfan*, the "Ahham al-'akhbar wa-al-'ara'" section incorporated a passage titled "the Ja^{c}fari madhhab" in which the editor of the issue – probably Shaykh Ahmad ^{c}Aref Al-Zayn himself – wrote: "The Shi^{c}i *qadi* does not escape the use of Hanafi law. Is that not blatant violence? The government of Iraq promulgated a just law that appoints a Shi^{c}i qadi in all places where the majority is Shi^{c}a, and such is the case of the Alawite

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213 *Al-'Irfan* Vol. 9, No. 4 (January 1924), 347-9.
214 *Al-'Irfan* Vol. 9, No. 7 (April 1924), 520-526.
215 *Al-'Irfan* Vol. 10, No. 3 (January 1925), 94-108.

state as well."[216] The Iraqi Shi^{c}i model thus served as a model for ^{c}Amilis, notwithstanding the high relevance in Shi^{c}i beliefs themselves. The close relationship – albeit in local imaginaries – that ^{c}Amilis built with Iraqi Shi^{c}is grew so much that in 1932, a letter from the Ja^{c}fari *qadi* Shaykh Safi Al-Din to a French official iterated the following:

> "Close to 100 young Shiʻi men went to Iraq, to Najaf in order to receive their religious education and to become ulama. Each family spends approximately 50 gold liras per year per child [on this]. There, the young men acquire the habits that the English try to inculcate in them. Wouldn't it be more advantageous for the Lebanese government, and above all for the French government, that this money be spent in Lebanon . . . [to be] educated under the guidance of the French, to learn the French language and to learn to be respectful towards French traditions?"[217]

Even though this letter concerns a later phase in the establishment of the Ja^{c}fari court, it serves as evidence that Iraq – pilgrimage, religious and non-religious studies, and tourism – had become part of the constant preoccupations of the Shi^{c}is. The spendings emphasized in the letter are not to be neglected: for a region that suffered from economic plight and a decade of impoverishment, spending 50 gold liras per year consisted in a remarkable endeavor for a specific religious education in Iraq.

Thus, by 1924, Jabal ^{c}Amel had borne witness of a shift in Shi^{c}i culture, whereby a close relationship to Iraq became prime to inter-confessional interactions within Lebanon. While the growing ties with the Arab sister land might not constitute in and of themselves a manifestation of sectarian behavior, the consequent *matalib* vis-à-vis mandate authorities actively called for a more rigid and institutional differentiation between Sunni and Shi^{c}a.

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[216] *Al-ʻIrfan* Vol. 9, No. 4 (January 1924), 363.

[217] MAE-Nantes, Fonds Syrie-Liban, Mandat, Carton #1663, "A/s la répartition des subsides et le traitement des chiites par l'État Libanais," BIH Merdjayoun et Tyr N° 31, 27 July—3 August 1932.

The prime example of sectarian *matlabiyya*

The Ja^{c}fari court consisted first and foremost in an institution designed by the colonial state upon Shi^{c}i resort to the politics of demands. According to correspondences between the High Commissioner in Greater Lebanon and his superior (The High Commissioner of the French Republic in Syria, Greater Lebanon, the Alawite state and Jabal Al-Druze), the *projet de loi* on the establishment of a Ja^{c}fari court started in 1924, when a "formal French commission of inquiry" was formed to investigate on how to fulfill the desires of the Shi^{c}a community, suggesting that a reform of the judicial system was part of Shi^{c}i demands already.[218]

Secondary sources have not gathered early proof of such demands from ^{c}Amili Shi^{ci}s themselves specifically. However, the mandate state archives in Nantes house a letter of particular interest to this topic: on January 6th, 1924 – thus probably before the creation of the French inquiry – General Weygand received a letter from Shi^{c}i notable "Abdallah [Iahia] Kalil", who was no other than Abdallah Yahya Khalil, from the Khalil family of *wujaha'* in Sour.

Abdallah Yahya Khalil's letter should be understood in the context of who the Shi^{c}i notable was. The Khalil family "settled in Tyre in the late 19th C. to become a leading, notable Shi^{c}i family. According to one source, they were supported by the ^{c}Ulema in their climb to prominence in an effort to undermine the unpopular dominance of the Sunni Al-Mamluk family of that city." Abdallah was a prosperous merchant holding an administrative position in Sour, and one of the leading figures of his family.[219] Abdallah's previous positions have led him to become the representative of Emir Faysal's Arab government in Sour, and a fervent supporter of Syrian unity and Arab nationalism.

[218] MAE-Nantes, Carton #1541, "S. G. Cabinet," April 8, 1925.
[219] Chalabi, 25.

Abdallah Yahya Khalil wrote his *matlab* in French, with a very high level and mastery of French epistolary style. Furthermore, he made sure to praise the French administration and to engage into its *mission civilisatrice* rhetoric, not because he agreed with it or because he began to express Francophile sentiments by 1923, but rather because he engaged into the classic form of politics of demand. The early repertoire of *matlabiyya* indeed followed his letter's structure, as Chapter 2 elaborated on.

In this letter making use of the colonial rhetoric of freeing Arabs from 'Turkish' tyranny and protecting non-orthodox religious groups, Abdallah Yahya Al-Khalil complained that "abiding by Sunni jurisdiction is an apostasy against [Shi^{c}i] religious principles" and that "all cases of personal matter involving Shi^{c}as should be treated by a Shi^{c}a *qadi*". He provided several motives to his claim, among which on the one hand, the difference in religious rites between Sunnis and Shi^{c}as, and on the other hand, the idea that their legal schools differ in doctrines. He even went on to give the example of the legal complication that ensued from his own separation with his wife Fariha Taoufik Ramadan. Al-Khalil however knew very little of Islamic law, let alone Ja^{c}fari law, whose appropriate name he did not mention, and for centuries. He made a demand of a sectarian nature, rather than of pure confessional and religious value. His economic framing of the issue the divorce case indicates the multidimensionality of his *matlab*, which partly derived its sectarian aspect from the economic relativity of a Shi^{c}i vis-à-vis his Sunni counterpart.

The author additionally drew an interesting comparison with a Christian sectarian divide to legitimate a Sunni/Shi^{c}a divide that was to supersede the religious aspect: "[The difference between Shi^{c}a and Sunni] well resembles what makes the difference between a Maronite and a Greek Orthodox [two different *sects* of Christianity]. Even though both are Christians, each

community however pertains its own personal status which differs greatly from the other, and this is what exists between Shi^{c}as and Sunnis."[220]

It also accomplished more than that: it showed that part of Lebanese citizens already understood the colonial concept of "personal status", and it alluded to the idea of different personal status law for Shi^{c}is and Sunnis, which would be only feasible with different jurisdictions and courts, meaning that although an institution was not specifically referred to in the letter, the author had implied the necessity of an institution dealing with Shi^{c}a matters exclusively.

Although by the end of 1925, several letter exchanges between French officials highlighted the widespread Shi^{c}a demand for the recognition of the Ja^{c}fari madhhab[221], this correspondence represents the earliest instance of Shi^{c}a *matlab* regarding Shari^{c}ah jurisdiction before the commission of inquiry. The letter was transferred on the 7th of January to Weygand's superior, the High Commissioner in Lebanon and the Syrian provinces, which suggests that Abdallah Yahya Khalil's letter served as a motive for the formation of a commission on the matter. In fact, the letter was transferred alone, with no complementary petition or letter attached, and with no mention of other similar demands.[222]

What is to be analyzed in this example is the French response to Abdallah Al-Khalil's request. It would indeed be reductive, and naïve, to think that the French administration in Greater Lebanon granted Abdallah Al-Khalil's request such importance for the sole purpose of his convincing argumentation.[223] In fact, as highlighted by the previous chapter, by 1924, hundreds of

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[220] MAE-Nantes, Carton #1541, "Je soussigné Adballah Iahya Kalil," January 6, 1924.
[221] MAE-Nantes, Carton #1541, "JURIDICTIONS RELIGIEUSES," 1924-1927.
[222] MAE-Nantes, Carton #1541, "S/ S: JURIDCTIONS RELIGIEUSES," January 7, 1924.
[223] In Appendix D, two elements demonstrate that the letter was subject to closer scrutiny from colonial officers than usual. First, on the last image of the appendix, we can see that the date and signature of the letter's author was cut out. Secondly, on the first image of the appendix, on the left, a small pencil inscription reveals that the letter was sent to Gouraud, the previous High Commissioner, showing that there already existed a project of dividing Muslim courts.

petitions and letters had been already sent to the mandate state from the Shi^{c}a community in order to ask for basic infrastructure in Jabal ^{c}Amel, but these demands (*matalib/*مطالب) had been ignored and continued to be completely ignored until at least the 1936 Bint Jubayl revolt.[224] Moreover, later in the chapter, additional evidence will be shown to support the claim that the French administration had unilaterally designed the project of a Shi^{c}i institution separated from a Sunni one, and that Al-Khalil's letter only acted as a moth to a flame. In fact, once the committee began to work on the legal project, concerns raised by the Shi^{c}as themselves disappear from recorded textual negotiations and reports, and other concerns proper to the colonizing entity resurfaced.

What we can infer from this is that Abdallah's letter consisted in a case where the sectarian *matlab* was intentionally expected from mandate authorities, which used it to give grounds for egal changes they had planned before. Thus, although there were local demands for the recognition of Shi^{c}i jurisprudence, the establishment of the Ja^{c}fari court did not seek to meet those demands, but rather another end benefitting the mandate administration.

The Ja^{c}fari court: a vector of colonial control behind unfortunate *façade* of religious rights

Following the 1921 census, what the French and part of the Maronites were fearing, however, did not dwell in the numbers of Muslims *per se* as much as it dwelled in the political power that these numbers could exert.

While pitching the 1926 *Arrêté* undermining the competence of *Shari^{c}ah* courts to General Gouraud, the *Conseiller Législatif* – whose name did not appear on the correspondence – wrote the following:

> "Muslim and Neo-Muslim communities that are separated from the states will tend to form, in the absence of their religious leaders, nations, political bodies, according to their millennial conceptions.

[224] Chalabi, 116.

> One must neither undermine nor exaggerate the dangers that could result from these institutions. Such danger could be serious if we let the Muslim mass organize itself as it wishes, left to itself.
>
> (…)
>
> It will be completely different [from xenophobia, hostility, and instinctive sentiments] if we undertake ourselves the initiative to design the institutions of the Muslim and Neo-Muslim communities, and if we organize them as we wish.
>
> The Muslim mass is passive; it is still used to the domination of a leader. We can, today, make it accept what we will not be able to impose in the future."[225]

With such evidence, one cannot deny that mandate authorities built religious institutions with the specific purpose of controlling "the Muslim mass". A couple of months before the latter correspondence for instance, the *Conseiller Législatif* discussed with General Gouraud whether to recognize the Ja^{c}fari madhhab before or after the promulgation of the 1926 *Arrêté* restricting personal status, gauging what could be easier to subjugate the *Shi^{c}i* mass. Whether Abdallah Al-Khalil unintentionally inspired colonial policy of control or whether it simply gave ground for the instigation of an already existing project is unclear.

But the colonial strategy is undeniable in this case, and the *Ja^{c}fari* court's role in the divide and conquer policy was well concocted. The Ja^{c}fari court consisted, for the French mandate authorities, in a means to "organize [the Shi^{c}a] as [they] wish" and to ensure their subjugation to a loyal "religious leader". The French effectively sought to produce a religious elite, building off of the Maronite model with which their colonial encroachment proved successfully. ^{c}Ulema naturally existed, but they had not necessarily composed a social structure of their own, especially the Shi^{c}i ones who were applying Hanafi law. In the years that follow 1926 – although even before – close relations between a class of ^{c}Ulema and mandate authorities start to ferment, and a framework of *matlabiyya* specific to the state-employed ^{c}Ulema category develop and consistently shows more success than the socio-economic *matlabiyya* of the masses. Therefore, the recognition of the *Ja^{c}fari*

[225] MAE-Nantes, Carton #1541, "S/ S: RESTRICTION DES JURIDCTIONS CHERIEH," 24 April 1926.

madhhab and the subsequent creation of the *Ja^c^fari* court acted as a façade for several colonial projects, one of them being the mandate's effort in creating a new elite that it could instrumentalize in its policy of control, especially since the power vacuum created by Kamil Al-As^c^ad's fleeing.

Furthermore, in the aforementioned report, the *Conseiller Législatif* insisted on "codification" as a means to "organize [the Muslim mass]", a standard colonial tool for the colonization of the mind, but also the reason why *Arrêté #3503* did not just recognize the Ja^c^fari madhhab but proceeded to codify through its articles 2, 3 and 4 the *Ja^c^fari* court and its competence in personal matters. *Al-mahkama al-ja^c^fariyya* and later its 1938 consolidation with the Law of Personal Status served to weaken both Arab nationalist and Islamic universalist movements in Greater Lebanon, the bulk of each group resting on the cohesiveness of the Lebanese Muslim community.[226]

This colonial strategy is even better corroborated by the master-student relationship that existed between Robert de Caix, the High Commissioner in Greater Lebanon until 1924, and his elder Louis-Hubert Lyautey, the designer of *Al-Dahir Al-Barbari*, the Moroccan legal divide between the Imazighen (pl. of Amazigh), the Arab Muslims and the Arab Jewish.[227]

It was not usual that information about the 1924 commission of inquiry had reached ^c^Amili press; Lebanese citizens were not aware of many of the other reforms, much less legal reforms like the 1936 Law of Personal Status, until the promulgation. Since 1924, ^c^Amili press *Al-^c^Irfan* had already published in its section "Ahham al-'akhbar wa-al-'ara'" (اهم الاخبار والآراء) an article expressing support for the commission and arguing for the recognition of the Ja^c^fari madhhab.[228]

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226 Weiss, 124.
227 Susan Miller, *A History of Modern Morocco* (Cambridge University Press, 2013), 122.
228 *Al-'Irfan* Vol. 9, No. 4 (January 1924), 363.

The performative effect of the 1924-1926 *mise en haleine* caused the Shi^{c}a to, on the one hand, keep petitioning for the state legitimization of Shi^{c}a jurisprudence and on the other hand, preparing for the different possible configurations of the court institution, both dynamics distracting ^{c}Amili Shi^{c}is from the demand for socio-economic rights.

In the eyes of the Shi^{c}a, the Ja^{c}fari court that they were promised since 1924 would become their new instrument of *matlabiyya*, as it represented the first Shi^{c}i institution and thus the first institution capable of ensuring a communication between the people and the state.

Therefore, the Ja^{c}fari court allowed the mandate state to trade with the Shi^{c}is: in order to buy temporary silence and loyalty from the Lebanese Shi^{c}a, French authorities provided them with part of their religious rights and opened an apparent platform for them to voice their complaints. Practicing sectarianism at the Ja^{c}fari court platform quickly disproved this belief in the next decade, foreshadowing the usual nature of colonial legal changes which Allan Christletow coined as a "formal autonomy voided of its substance."[229]

So far, this chapter has shown that the Ja^{c}fari court did not stem from a mere top-down process, but rather from a tri-vectorial dynamic of top-down, down-top, and lastly top-down relations between the Shi^{c}a of Jabal ^{c}Amel and mandate authorities. Since 1918, the Shi^{c}is channeled *matlabiyya*, an intensive repertoire of collective demand, vis-à-vis the political authorities that supervised – or fought to supervise – their land. After the 1920 war out of which the French came victorious, Shi^{c}i *matlabiyya* took a strongly socio-economic turn as the mandate's neglect towards the South and its inhabitants slowly turned misery into the forever damnation of

[229] Allen Christelow, *Muslim Law Courts and the French Colonial State in Algeria* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1985), 4.

the Shi^{c}i peasant. French pauperization of ^{c}Amili Shi^{c}is and indifference towards its intensive politics of demand represented the first top-down process.

As a consequence, the category of being Shi^{c}a began to mean more than being religious, and gradually catalyzed a social and economic dimension as well. These identities intermingled inevitably with the religious aspect of *being Shi^{c}a* as education – including religious education – represented one of core *matalib*. Comparing with their counterparts within Lebanon, the Shi^{c}i masses remarked a strong disparity in rights, and started to find inspiration in the situation of other Arab Shi^{c}is, like in Iraq, where in 1924, a Shi^{c}i court already existed. The mirror of the Iraqi Shi^{c}i and the context of *matlabiyya* brought about the possibility of sectarian revendications among many other types of demands. This represented the down-top process, which colonial authorities had expected and prepared for.

Indeed, once sectarian *matalib* were being made, like in the case of Abdallah Al-Khalil's letter, French colonial administration seized the opportunity to enact legal changes such as the Ja^{c}fari *madhhab* and court, which served as colonial façades, masks of colonial benevolence behind which lied a pernicious political agenda of controlling the Muslim masses against the Christians, as well as anticolonial political factions (Arab nationalism and Islamic universalism). Such was reserved the down-top process into, in reality, a larger dynamic of colonial strategy enacting of form of indirect top-down sectarianization.

Conclusion

"قمت ابكي لما رأيت بلادي   - جنة الخلد - مرتعاً للشرور
ورأيت الدين الحنيف حساماً   بيدي كل خانع مأجور
والفقير الضعيف ما بين شيخ   وزعيم كالشلو بين النسور
فاستشاطوا غيظاً وقالوا مضل   ورموني بالبغر والتزوير
فاحتملت لأذى وقلت لنفسي   حصنك الحق لا تراعي وثوري
مثل هذا الكلام قل قديماً   من ذوي البغي الامام الكبير
كل عصر له حسين وشمر   حكمة الله قبل خلق العصور "

موسى الزين شراره، (كل عصر له حسين وشمر)[230]

"I went on crying when I witnessed my country
A paradise for eternity - become a haven of evil

And saw the true religion be a sword
In the hands of every hired subordinate

And the powerless destitute between a preacher
And a leader like shreds between eagles

Then they snapped of anger and said I am a deceiver
And accused me of greed and fraud

So I bore the harm and told myself
Truth has shielded you, do not mind them

Similar to these words, tell that back in the days
Of the tyrants was the great imam

Every period has its Husayn and Shimr[231]
That is Allah's wisdom before the beginning of time"[232]

Musa Al-Zayn Shararah, "Every period has its Husayn and Shimr"

[230] *Al-ᶜIrfan*, vol. 27 (1937), 384.
[231] Husayn here refers to Imam Husayn, the third Shiᶜi Imam, and the one who is mourned on the last day of ᶜAshoura'. Shimr refers to Shimr Ben Jawshan, one of the people who betrayed the first Imam, ᶜAli Ibn Abi Talib. The Husayn/Shimr dichotomy, here, is a metaphor of more than just the good and the evil; Imam Husayn is known for symbolizing the oppressed, while Shirm has a connotation built around treachery. Because of this ambivalence in symbolism, it is unclear whether the dichotomy represents the Shiᶜi/French divide, the Shiᶜi/non-Shiᶜi divide or the Arab nationalist Shiᶜi/Lebanist sectarian Shiᶜi divide. The next paragraphs provide context for this ambiguity.
[232] The poem was only published in *Al-ᶜIrfan* and was never translated. The provided translation is manual.

In the late 1930s, Greater Lebanon consisted in an entirely different administrative and executive project than the Beirut Vilayet, differing from it on the economic and naturally political levels, but mostly on the social level. Those who endured these transformations the harshest lived in the North and South extremities, respectively Tripoli and Jabal ᶜAmel.

Our focus is here is sectarianization, which characterizes the situation of mandate Jabal ᶜAmel - as a Shiᶜi enclave in the Mediterranean. Before the French administration established in 1924 the *Comité* at the origin of the Jaᶜfari court, part of the ᶜAmili elites - notables like Abdallah Al-Khalil, intellectuals like the ᶜAmili Trio and religious *ᶜUlema* - had advocated for a separation between Sunni and Shiᶜi institutions, and what ensued was a struggle for institutional equality between both courts before the law. For instance, Shiᶜi intellectuals and religious leaders, such as the *qadi* Shaykh Husayn Mughniyya, strongly advocated for equal salary between Hanafi and Jaᶜfari *qadi*s.[233] In the 1920s already, Shiᶜi-Sunni comparisons and the resentment stemming from economic and social inferiority to other sects constantly occupied the minds of the upper-class figures, far removed from the demanding nature of fieldwork. The creation of the Jaᶜfari court did not occur through a unilateral and simplistic top-down process. Neither did other instances of sectarianization.

How, then, did the Shiᶜa become sectarian?

This work demonstrated that the sectarianization process of ᶜAmili Shiᶜis did not depend on sectarian law. To some extent, it preceded the making of sectarian law in Greater Lebanon. Chapter 1 introduced the concept of sectarian violence in the post-WWI context, which was strategically instrumentalized by the French *colonel* in Sour to blur the lines between confession

[233] Weiss, 112-115.

and political agenda. The 1918-1920 period indeed saw intense politicization of the Shi^{c}a in Jabal ^{c}Amel. Having been accustomed to Ottoman rule and the *muqata^{c}ji* system for centuries, ^{c}Amilis did not expect the chaos of the immediate aftermath of the Great War. The performative creation of the "Shi^{c}i bloc" by both the French and Emir Faysal, and their mobilization through petitions, associations, and funding, thickened the Shi^{c}i or pro-Faysal / Christian or pro-French dichotomy. 1918 saw the advent of the ^{c}Amili Shi^{c}i as a political being, as put forth by the Wadi Al-Hujayr conference. But above all, the Shi^{c}a's sectarianization came with the extreme violence of the ^{c}Ayn Ebel massacre and its French response, the Nieger campaign, which left the Shi^{c}a in Lebanon singled out as *the* marginal group. Having no choice but to accept the coercive reality of the mandate, the second phase of sectarianization consisted in the creation of a Shi^{c}i identity, a simultaneously inward and outward process whereby Shi^{c}i identity became defined by the misery that French neglect condemned South Lebanon to, as well as by *matlabiyya*, a repertoire of collective action that they extensively resorted to, and that reinforced intra-confessional loyalties. Colonel Pechkoff's own cry of help to his superior mandate administrator, the High Commissioner De Martel, summarized the effect of the French mandate on South Lebanon. The "Shi^{c}i peasant"[234] became the classic figure of the South. The colonial response to *matlabiyya* - one of disregard and further neglect - did not stem from the idea that the French genuinely expressed hatred towards the Shi^{c}a. It is true that the colonial administration held no interest in the South other than its economic resources, which helped sustain Beirut's economy, but the mandate used its differential attitude towards sects as a way of furthering the lines between sectarian groups. In the 1930s, it had become obvious that religious affiliation did not stand as the only difference between the Shi^{c}i and his Sunni, Druze, or Maronite neighbor: *Shi^{c}i* connotated a social and economic status as well as a

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[234] In the words of Colonel Pechkoff. See footnote 160.

particular relationship to the mandate state. For these reasons, the sectarian identity of a ^{c}*Amili Shi^{c}i* - encompassing more than just *shi^{c}ism* per se - became prime to his or her other types of identification, such as *Libanité*[235]. This mindset can be summarized by the common sentence: "there is no one but the Shi^{c}i that could help another Shi^{c}i person"[236].

The importance of the mandate administration in sectarianization discourse lies in where and when it decided to selectively interfere. By the end of WWI, the *second* French colonial empire[237] was around two centuries old, and the colonial administration had mastered sectarian divides in Algeria and Morocco, between Jewish and Muslim peoples, and Arabs and Amazighs.[238] By the end of WWI, the shortcomings of French colonial direct administration, of pacification and of the *legal* empire had resulted in several hardships for the metropole to manage its colonies. Modernity and the crisis of Empire birthed new colonial strategies. That was the context for the colonization of Jabal ^{c}Amel.

In 1920, French officials expressed an intention to pit Christians and Muslims against each other, which is why the French colonial officer in Sour refused to involve the French army before the Shi^{c}i-Maronite bloodbath of ^{c}Ayn Ebel. Again, all throughout the 1920s, the exhaustive use of *matlabiyya* and the development of an intra-sectarian solidarity could not come about without the purposeful and strategic decline by the French administration of most Shi^{c}i demands: roads, municipalities, schools, public funding… even potable water! Sectarianization thus became

[235] 'Libanité' is the French terminology used to refer to the feeling of belonging to Lebanon as a political project, Lebaneseness.
[236] This is a common sentence within Shi^{c}is, and within other sectarian groups as well.
[237] In colonial historiography, the first French empire is built on the transatlantic slave trade and settler colonialism in the West Indies whereas the second French empire is built on 19th C. colonialism.
[238] Miller, *A History*, 122.

intertwined with - inherent to, even - how mandate policies developed in South Lebanon. One could even term it as *politics of sectarianization*.

The case of the establishment of the Ja^{c}fari court encompassed all the previous arguments. It first and foremost showed that sectarian law - of which the court is a good example - did not precede and condition the sectarianization of the Shi^{c}a. By 1924, a good number of the Shi^{c}a elite and, to some extent, of their partisans - peasants and workers - had engaged in sectarian behavior in a way or another. What the case study of the Ja^{c}fari court particularly showed, furthermore, was the non-linear, tri-dimensional vector of sectarianization, which rested on the orchestrations of a strategic colonial policy. In 1924, while thousands of urgent demands were being discarded by the regional *colonels*, the High Commissioner selectively retained Abdallah Al-Khalil's letter pushing for the establishment of a specific court for Shi^{c}as because, as Chapter 3 showed, not only it fulfilled the divide policy of the mandate, but it also allowed for a discourse pinning the Shi^{c}a themselves as the origin of the Sunni-Shi^{c}a divide in Greater Lebanon. In reality, this case study shed light on a pattern in the sectarianization process of ^{c}Amili Shi^{c}is. Indeed, their sectarianization started with a push from the colonial power: the occupation of Jabal ^{c}Amel, the campaign of impoverishment, and the rejection of Shi^{c}i demands (*matalib*). This top-down vector was however met with a response from ^{c}Amili Shi^{c}is: respectively, the development of the *^{c}isabat* and the ^{c}Ayn Ebel massacre, the active construction of a Shi^{c}i identity wrapped around religion and history, and the demand for a Ja^{c}fari court. In each case, the ^{c}Amili response served the expectations of colonial officials, who instrumented the Shi^{c}i pushback to impose or apply a sectarianizing policy: the Nieger campaign and the particular tax on Shi^{c}i peasants, the restriction of Shi^{c}i identity to a socio-economic reality, and the legal distinction between Hanafi and Ja^{c}fari court. This tri-dimensional dynamic (top-down, bottom response, followed by a final top-down policy) defined the

sectarianization of ᶜAmili Shiᶜis for the 1918 to late 1930s period. It was the purposeful and strategic, not just legal, colonial management of South Lebanon that infused sectarianism in the region by the last decade of the mandate. Obviously, this does not imply that by the 1940s, every Shiᶜi individual presented a sectarian behavior, but rather that sectarianism had become, for most, the way of integrating Greater Lebanon's mosaic.

Legal codification of sectarianism only came after Abdallah Yahya Al-Khalil's letter, which already expressed sectarian feeling in the region, thus concluding that sectarian law did not function like a machine that imposed sectarianism on the hollow colonial subject. All the contrary, sectarian law - in 1925, 1926, then in 1936 and finally 1943 - came to codify sectarian dynamics that had been developing as a result of the nature of French colonial rule in South Lebanon.

This thesis uses primary sources that extended to the mid-1930s; but in 1936, a last movement of back-and-forth interactions between the colonial power and ᶜAmili Shiᶜis confirmed my argument and sealed the possibility for the Shiᶜa in Lebanon to exist beyond or outside the frame of sectarianism.

1936: The ultimate debate on *ta'ifiyya* and *qawmiyya*[239]

After sectarian *matlabiyya* amounted to the existence of the first Shiᶜi public institution in the Levant *ever*, the demands of the Shiᶜis vis-à-vis mandate officials quickly revered back to their fate of neglect and rejection. In the 1935-6, sectarianism was publicly questioned all across Greater Lebanon, for the last and most significant time during the mandate.

[239] *Qawmiyya*, from *qawm* (people), refers to nationalism.

In the years leading up to the mid-1930s, heavy taxes, decline in prices due to the global depression, and a paralleled growing dependency of the South's economy to tobacco farming all converged into the 1936 Bint Jubayl revolt.

The historical narratives on *Intifadat Bint Jubayl* are plural, and different authors read the event through very diverging lenses. A thorough in-detail narrative of the *intifada* composed of both Arabic sources and the French national archives' reports has yet to be written. The summary that the following lines provide, which is by no means a complete account of the insurrection, only allows for the reader to understand what is relevant for this short discussion on sectarianism.

One of the inevitable landmarks of this revolt is the January 30, 1935 decree (*Arrêté 16/L.R.*) promulgated by the French High Commissioner De Martel and dividing by four the allowed surface of tobacco crops for the year 1935-6 crops, setting a plummeting price for one tobacco unit. In early 1936, travelers from Damascus to Beirut and their visits in the South, as well as the rise of tobacco contraband across ᶜAmili borders made Colonel Pechkoff very skeptical towards a ᶜAmili-Syrian cooperation against the mandate and towards a potential movement "linking the two matters of the economic situation and Syrian unity".[240] A secret meeting that took place in Taybeh, gathering the most powerful *zuᶜama'* of Jabal ᶜAmel as well as influent notables, doubled French angst and urged the promulgation in March of both the *Traité Franco-Libanais* and *Arrêté 60/L.R.* on the institutionalization of personal status by sect.[241]

Intifadat Bint Jubayl stemmed from the convergence of the economic plight of tobacco farming and the political turmoil surrounding *l'unité syrienne*: respectively, what moved the farmer, and what moved the landowner, the notable and the rest of the elite/intellectual class.

[240] MAE-Nantes, Carton #1/SL/1/V/1875, *BIH TYR 1935-6*, « Commandant Pechkoff – Derniere semaine de Juin ».
[241] Ibid.

French mandate officials particularly dreaded meetings that united Southern Greek Orthodox Christians, Sunnis, and a bulk of Shi^{c}i Muslims. Of the Greek Orthodox supporters of the Southern cause were Alfred and Selim Abu-Samra, editors of the influential journal *Al-Qalam Al-Sarīh*.[242] These meetings would incisively call for Syrian Unity as a means for the liberation of South Lebanon from the shackles of *Lebanese* authorities - read, the entire colonial structure that was Greater Lebanon.

The few Maronite Christians supporting this cause rallied behind the Maronite Patriarch of Bkerke Antoine ^{c}Arida while Druze insurgents rallied behind the Emir Shehab family. It is very important to note that the Shi^{c}a did not have a figure to rally behind given that their *^{c}Ulema* and main *za^{c}im* Ahmad Al-As^{c}ad had rallied behind the French as a form of loyalty. Such context allowed for ^{c}Adel ^{c}Useyran from the Saida-based ^{c}Useyran family of notables to rise as the main Shi^{c}i figure of the 1936 movement.[243]

The popular insurrection exploded in direct reaction to the interrogation of ^{c}Ali Beydoun, a Bint Jubayl notable who had signed a petition advocating for Syrian unity, on March 31st, which also happened to be the 8th of Muharram, i.e. the height of *^{c}Ashoura'*.[244] The interrogation ignited a violent demonstration of around 2,000 ^{c}Amilis, in which women and youngsters marked a particular presence, in front of the *caracol*[245] and the *serail* of Bint Jubayl. French military retaliation against the revolt resulted in three *martyrdoms* and many more wounded. Two weeks later, the *caracol* demanded the imprisonment of ^{c}Adel ^{c}Useyran and Selim Abu-Jamra as well, for their attempt at reviving the movement after the tragedy of the three martyrs. Again, around

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[242] Ibid.

[243] Adel ^{c}Useyran however did not obtain the trust of all Shi^{c}i insurgents of the South, some of whom, like a group from Nabatiyeh, rather attested on their "full support for the decision of the Patriarch". (Ibid)

[244] As the Shi^{c}a grew more attached to a reinvented Shi^{c}i tradition during the mandate, religious ceremonies such as ^{c}Ashoura became a place of political complaint and catalyzer as well.

[245] Ottoman-Turkish terminology for a police station.

2,000 ᶜAmilis gathered in Saida, and numbers flooded the three other main cities of Jabal ᶜAmel. On the 19th of April, the following chants were heard in Saida by the predominantly Shiᶜi demonstrators: “Muslims and Christians / For Syrian Unit / For the eviction of foreigners [the French]”[246]. The chants represent several aspects of the political and social position of ᶜAmili Shiᶜis in 1936. As Pechkoff had pointed out, and as the demonstrations’ articulation foreshadowed, the *intifada* consisted in both a tobacco revolt and a call for Syrian unity. But the two were co-dependent, and the advocacy for Syrian unity stemmed directly from a dissatisfaction with Lebanese conditions, which, for ᶜAmili Shiᶜis, corresponded to economic impoverishment and sectarianism. One cannot deny the inter-sectarian mosaic of the *intifada*, which showed that the Shiᶜi masses rejected sectarianism and its system of exclusively confessional affiliations[247], which worked in symbiosis with both the economic plight and the separation from Syria.

By the mid-1930s, ᶜAmilis had understood that the sectarian regime was no other than a weapon for mandate authorities. In fact, a year later, Shaykh Ahmad ᶜAref Al-Zayn, editor of *Al-ᶜIrfan*, dedicated a long introduction to the in July 1937 issue, part of which was an article titled “Between *ta’ifiyya* [sectarianism] and *qawmiyya* [nationalism]”. The introductory article rejected sectarianism from its very first paragraph and left no room for ambiguity by laying the decade-long dilemma of the Shiᶜi community:

> “[God] forbid we fall into blind bigotry, if any of us committed sectarianism he gets overwhelmed by their loud waves and is accused of having no modernization or leniency or tolerance or culture or progressiveness. They believed and we reached peace through this and that’s why we walked on the open path of nationalism, but they didn’t contribute a single word alluding to their arabism and started coming up with a bunch of different ethnicities from phoenician, roman and christian… As if there is no community called the Arabs.”[248]

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[246] The original chant in Arabic includes the following:
"اسلام ومسيحية / من اجل الوحدة السورية / لنقلّع الافرنجية"
[247] Indeed, in the aftermath of ᶜAdel ᶜUseyran’s detention, a number of his Shiᶜi partisans bypassed their co-religious authorities and directly flooded the Maronite Patriarch with petitions, imploring him to lobby vis-à-vis the French for ᶜUseyran’s liberation.
[248] The original text in Arabis includes the following:

The excerpt alludes to the passage from the 1920 war, which resulted in the villanization of the Shi^{c}a, to the 1936 *intifada* putting forth Syrian unity. Sectarianism as an inherent or an immutable concept had no place in Shaykh ^{c}Aref Al-Zayn's vision: *ta'ifiyya* was the product of the colonial period. *Qawmiyya* (nationalism) as it was employed by Al-Zayn, signified Arab nationalism[249] - associated with the creation of one Arab state of Greater Syria - which did not simply imply a territorial addition to Greater Syria but mostly an end to the sectarian system. "Indeed, the Syrian Christian" - in opposition to the Lebanese Christian - saw himself in every iteration and manifestation of Syria, as much as the Syrian Muslim, "for the country is your country just as much as it is ours".[250] The political project of Greater Lebanon, for the author and his partisans, entangled inevitably - if not overlapped - with sectarianism, which had brought about Maronite hegemony and Shi^{c}i impoverishment.[251] The "agitateurs"[252] of Bint Jubayl - as the French would call them - thus actively protested to abrogate a system that they gauged responsible for their misery: not just the *Régie*, nor the enclave of the Lebanese borders, but the sectarianization process they were inevitably undergoing and which they were very much aware of.

Nevertheless, already on April 20th, Colonel Pechkoff wrote to the High Commissioner: "the movement dies"[253], and *Al-^{c}Irfan*'s editors wrote in the continuation of that context whereby a 1936-like Southern aspiration for Syrian unity had become a vestige of the past. The winners of the 1936 *intifada* - those like Ahmed Al-As^{c}ad[254] who had aligned with colonial authorities just at

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"وحاشا (الأعلى) لتعصبنا الأعمى فاذا قام أحدنا بالطائفية طغت عليه امواجهم [الأحزاب] الصاخبة ورموه بعدم التجدد وعدم التساهل وعدم التسامح وعدم الثقافة والرقي. آمنوا وسلمنا بهذا كله ولذلك سلكنا طريق القومية اللاحب ولكنهم لم يساهموا معنا بكلمة واحدة تدل على عروبتهم وراحوا يأتوننا بعصبة أمم من فينيقية ورومانية وصليبية والخ وكانه ليس هناك امة يقال لها العرب"

[249] Modern readings of this source have falsely attributed qawmiyya to Lebanese nationalism, which completely misses Shaykh ^{c}Aref Al-Zayn's point.

[250] *Al-^{c}Irfan*, vol. 27 (1937), 321.

[251] Reported from a colonial officer, Shaykh ^{c}Aref Al-Zayn would have even gone as far as to compare the Palestinian situation of double colonization - by the British and by the Zionist agency - to the Lebanese one, by a "franco-assyro-chaldeo-armenian mandate".

[252] MAE-Nantes, Carton #1/SL/1/V/1875, *BIH TYR 1935*-6

[253] Ibid (July 1936).

[254] Son of Abdel Latif Al-As^{c}ad, himself son of Kamil Bey Al-As^{c}ad.

the right time - recognized the existence of a binary similar to that observed by Shaykh ^{c}Aref Al-Zayn. For instance, the Grand Mufti of Saida assured the French of his loyalty to the Lebanese borders, noting that "we do not indulge in delusions. Despite all the advantages that they have flaunted before our eyes, we remain well aware of the fact that among 3,000,000 Sunnis in Syria, the 150,000 Shi^{c}is will cease to exist as a community. Conversely, in Lebanon, we form a fifth of the population; our opinion has weight on the balance, and most of our revendications are either fulfilled or in the course of being so".[255]

Given the violent repression of the 1936 insurrection, ^{c}Amilis were indeed left with no choice but to express loyalty towards the mandate and to coercively embrace sectarianism. The *za^{c}im* Ahmed Al-As^{c}ad, understood this dynamic and quickly rallied behind the colonial authorities. What ensued from the alliance between *^{c}Ulema*, *zu^{c}ama'* and lots of notables with mandate authorities was a system of confessional loyalties which got imposed as the only way of securing safety, economic stability, and social ascendance. These confessional loyalties tied the Shi^{c}i of lower class to a the Shi^{c}i of higher class: the epitomic performance of the clientelist relationship "there is no one but the Shi^{c}i that could help another Shi^{c}i person". The Shi^{c}i elite benefited greatly from this network and Ahmed Al-As^{c}ad became the ultimate example of a center of sectarian affiliations[256]; lower class Shi^{c}is - farmers, peasants, and workers - were confined to this reality which gradually engraved into the social organization of Shi^{c}i South Lebanon.[257]

The epigraph to this conclusion summarizes this entire last turn of events and its effect on the anti-sectarian movement. Musa Al-Zayn Shararah published his poem in the same *Al-^{c}Irfan*

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[255] MAE-Nantes, Carton #1/SL/1/V/1875, *BIH TYR 193*6 (July 1936)

[256] In the third week of August 1937, Colonel Pechkoff documented, to the High Commissioner, Ahmad Al-As^{c}ad's effort vis-à-vis Shi^{c}i notables who have diasporic ties in Africa to raise an amount of money for him to recover his ancestors' house in Taybeh. Al-As^{c}ad repaired the fall of the traditional *za^{c}im* of the *iqta^{c}* system by integrating a new colonial elite. On the reformed colonial elites and confessional ties, see: Jyoti Hosagrahar, "Mansions to Margins: Modernity and Domestic Landscape of Historic Delhi, 1847-1910," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians,* v. 60, no. 1 (March 2001): 26-45.

[257] Chalabi, 135.

issue as Sheikh ᶜAref Al-Zayn's fatalistic introduction. The poem well expresses, once again, the loss of hope in a Greater Syria exempted from all forms of sectarianism and ends with a religious reference to an everlasting political dichotomy: "To each era its Huseyn and its Shimr / Such is Allah's maxim before the creation of eras".[258] Whether "Shimr" - the evil in the Shiᶜi narrative - referred to the French or to other sects, or to the Shiᶜi elite that shook hands with the sectarian system, remains unclear, but the most probable answer rests in the union of all of three. The poem overall is a curse to what the Shiᶜa's situation had become in the new reality of Greater Lebanon.

What if we tried to make the subaltern speak?

This project focused on the understudied period from 1918 to the early 1930s. The Shiᶜa of Jabal ᶜAmel received much less attention during the mandate - let alone the Ottoman era - than during the civil war (1975-1990) and post-war Lebanon. Tamara Chalabi's book indeed focalizes on this same period but through the lens of nationalization and integration to Lebanese society.[259] The major historiographical discourse on how the Shiᶜa became sectarian during the mandate thus rests on very few works, which put forth the legal argument that traces ᶜAmili sectarianization to the post-Jaᶜfari court period (1926-1940s). Max Weiss does a wonderful job at making use, for the first time, of Jaᶜfari court records.[260] However, surprisingly, the 1918-1920 war found no significant place in Weiss's historiographical intervention on Shiᶜi sectarianism. My work was able to fill this exact gap in the scholarship and fulfills the largest project of restoring the subalterns' agency. The methodological issue that accompanies a quasi-exclusive usage of Jaᶜfari court records dwells in the impeding fact that the court is a colonial institution, controlled by a class of

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[258] *Al-ᶜIrfan*, vol. 27 (1937), 384.
[259] Chalabi, 139.
[260] Weiss, 33.

^{c}*Ulema* in bed with the '*muntadib*', the colonizer.[261] The Shi^{c}as of Jabal ^{c}Amel did not simply adopt sectarianism once sectarian law was promulgated and applied. As my work showed, sectarianization came with colonial negotiations and instrumentalizations that even preceded any sectarian institution. There is a level of - not just physical - violence exerted by the very much challenged "Empire of Law" that, when understudied, leaves room for the colonial power to ascribe dividing systems such as sectarianism to this same law and to the fabricated passivity of colonial subjects. Such tropes allow for a fractional de-responsibilization of the colonial administration, one that the subalterns rejected loudly and continue to reject.

In *We Are All For The Fatherland*, a documentary directed in 1979[262] by Maroun Baghdadi[263], we do hear the subaltern speak. A religious *shaykh* from the village of Mayfadoun expressed that "the French gave the Southerners all religious liberties, but when it came to the Litani project or to schools, [they] were faced with rejections from the mandate; mandate authorities were violent towards demonstrations, and in short, it was a 'cry over [Imam] Husayn but do not cry over your miserable future' situation"[264]. That my research's historiographical narrative overlaps with that of the speaking *shaykh* constitutes, to me, a proof that this work found success in the metrics of its initial intentions. Needless to say, this is merely an attempt at digging up what the subaltern could tell us, and a historian cannot but only get closer to the accurate picture. Tracing an exhaustive account of every ^{c}Amili Shi^{c}i's actions and inner thoughts between 1918 and 1946 would be the unattainable ideal to reply to my questions thoroughly and perfectly.

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[261] Max Weiss explores the close ties between the religious structure and the colonial power. See: Weiss, 117.
[262] The Israeli invasion of South Lebanon started in 1976 with the annexation of Mount Hermont. When Baghdadi is filming, Israeli soldiers control most of the villages underneath the Litani river and Baghdadi used his identity as a Christian in order to be given free access within the annexed region.
[263] Maroun Baghdadi, *We Are All for the Fatherland*, 1979. The title in Arabic is "Kulluna Lil-Watan", the title and first sentence of the Lebanese National Anthem.
[264] Ibid.

In fact, this meticulous task brought about its own particular and beautiful challenges, one of which dwelled in juggling three languages: English, early 20^{th} C. Arabic - both classic and dialectical - and French. Intertwined with language was the issue of reading along and against the grain of French national archives. Figuring out the intention behind specific terminologies appeared to be more evasive than expected: what does the colonial officer mean by the "jeunesse amélite"? who is included? And what does this inclusion/exclusion process disclose about the colonial psyche of the mandate period? Along with the 'grain', I have been met with the extremely interesting though consuming work of browsing extremely lengthy weekly reports - the *Bulletin d'Informations Hebdomadaires*, which can be a long as more than a thousand page for one year - and selecting the most relevant passages to include in this work; and I seize this opportunity to remind my reader, once again, that this piece does not claim to report on every aspect of mandate life in South Lebanon, nor does it reject competing narratives. Indeed, a cautious attitude against speaking for the *subaltern*, instead of trying to make the *subaltern* themselves speak, has perpetually accompanied the writing process of this thesis, as I am myself well aware of the sensitive consequences of such writing caprices.

In fact, there are many more questions that I charge the future scholarship to undertake. On the one hand, completing the narrative of the 1936 *intifada* cannot but come with a further analysis of the anti-colonial and anti-sectarian movement throughout the last decade of the mandate, and the figures to follow closely for this boiling analysis would be ᶜAdel ᶜUsayran and Shaykh ᶜAref Al-Zayn. Although the movement "dies" in Pechkoff's words, ᶜUsayran's rise to Parliament after the independence[265] begs the question of tracing the evolution of the anti-sectarian movement after sectarianism persisted beyond the mandate. The second axis of what remains to be studied revolves

[265] Chalabi, 137.

around Baghdadi's documentary, and his questions about the Israeli occupation of South Lebanon (1976-2000). In his interviews, a second religious *shaykh* expressed that "the people of the South bears on their shoulders for the entire Arab nation"[266]. How did the Lebanese-Palestinian porous border change the relationship of ᶜAmilis to Greater Lebanon? How did the Zionist agenda and the several raids of Shiᶜi villages during the mandate participate in furthering a Shiᶜi identity based on resistance? As a Maronite soldier points out in Baghdadi's piece, "the Israelis helped us"[267]. What roots did the Maronite-Zionist alliance find in the mandate period, and how did it further shatter the hopes for a Shiᶜi-Maronite coexistence in the South?

[266] Baghdadi, *We Are All for the Fatherland.*
[267] Ibid.

APPENDIX A
Telegram titled "Irrigation of Saida and Sour's plains with the waters of Nahr-Kasmieh"

Original (in French):

Le Nahr-Kasmieh se fette dans la mer entre Saïda et Tyr. En utilisant une partie de ses eaux pour l'irrigation on pourrait mettre en plein rapport une étendue de 7.000 hectares de plaine environ, moitié du côté de Saïda moitié du côté de Tyr.

Ces terrains, qui ne donnent actuellement que de maigres récoltes de céréales, se prêteraient alors à la culture du coton, aux cultures maraichères et aux plantations de citronniers et d'orangers. Ces cultures occuperaient un bien plus grand nombre de familles et le rendement de la terre serait infiniment supérieur, l'écoulement des produits pouvant facilement se faire par Tyr, Saïda et Beyrouth.

La concession de cette entreprise d'irrigation a fait l'objet de plusieurs demandes et études, notamment de la part du groupe Saïd Boustany et Alexandre Bousteny qui ont été en pourparlers à ce sujet avec les autorités ottomanes de 1910 à 1914 et ont renouvelé leur demande depuis l'occupation alliée.

D'autre part un groupe de Beyrouth, comprenant MM. AFTINOS et HACHO, VAYSSIE, EID et A. BEYHUM a également sollicité cette concession par une demande en date du 1er Juillet 1920.

Manual translation:

"The Nahr-Kasmieh (river of Kasmieh [a ramification of the Litani river]) ends in the sea between Saida and Sour. By using a part of its waters to irrigate, it would be possible to put to use a surface of around 7,000 hectares of plains, half on Saida's side and the other half on Sour's.

These fields, which currently serve very thin harvests of grains, would then serve the cultivation of vegetables and plantations of lemon and orange trees. These cultivations would employ a larger number of families and its land harvest would be infinitely superior, and the circulation of products could be easily done through Sour, Saida and Beirut.

The concession of this irrigation matter was claimed and studied several times, by the Said and Alexandre Boustany group who had negotiating conversations about this matter with Ottoman authorities from 1910 to 1914 and who renewed their request vis-à-vis the occupation of the Allies.

Another group from Beirut, comprising of Mme. Aftinos and Hacho Vayssie and A. Beyhum equally revindicated this concession through a request dated to July 1st, 1920."[268]

[268] MAE-La Courneuve, Carton #38, *Dossier Politique Generale*, « Des Notices sur les Concessions les plus Interessantes susceptibles d'etre accordees », 27 March 1922.

APPENDIX B
Telegram titled “Petroleum concession of Soughmour - Government of Greater Lebanon”

Original (in French)

Concession pétrolifère de Soughmour
(Gouvernement du Grand Liban)

Agissant au nom et pour le compte du Crédit Foncier d'Algérie et de Tunisie et de tout groupement de sociétés dont il ferait partie et auquel il serait astreint ou désireux de donner ou céder le bénéfice de tout permis de recherches obtenu par lui, Monsieur DURAND, Secrétaire Général des Sièges d'Orient du Crédit Foncier d'Algérie et de Tunisie, a demandé un permis de recherches de pétrole et de tous dérivés ou succédanés du pétrole dans la région comprise entre les villages de Yuhmur et Karaon, sur la rive gauche du fleuve Litani et sur une profondeur de 4 Km. à l'Est de la rive gauche de ce cours d'eau.

A peu près au centre de la région ainsi définie se trouve le village de Soughmour./.

Manual translation:

“Petroleum concession in Soughmour (government of Greater Lebanon)

Acting in the name and for the account of the *Crédit Foncier d’Algérie et de Tunisie* and of all sets of companies he would be a part of and to which he would be inclined to give or concede the gains of any resource exploitation permit he obtains, Mr. DURAND, Secretary General of the Orient Quarters of the *Crédit Foncier d’Algérie et de Tunisie*, asked a permit to look for petroleum and any derivative of petroleum in the region between the villages of Yuhmur and Karaon, on the left side of the Litani river and for a depth of 4km, to the East of the left side of this river hand.

Approximately in the center of the region thus described lies the village of Soughmour.”[269]

[269] Ibid.

APPENDIX C

Telegram titled "Abduction of the waters Nahr el Taseh - concession of the waters of Nabatiyeh"[270]

Original (in French):

Adduction des eaux du Nahr el Taseh 47

(Concession des eaux de Nabatié)

M. Youssef Ismael ZEÏN, de Saïda, a demandé la concession de l'entreprise qui consisterait à capter les eaux du Nahr el Taseh dont la source, Ain el Taseh, est à I2 Km. de Nabatié (Liban Sud), pour assurer la distribution de l'eau potable nécessaire à Nabatié (4000)habitants) et aux villages voisins et l'irrigation des terrains environnants.

L'affaire semble intéressante à réaliser Nabatié petit centre commercial et le village voisin Kafar Rouman n'ayant pas de distribution d'eau établie.

D'autre part M. ZEÏN, propriétaire lui-même de trois moulins sur le Nahr el Taseh est un des premiers intéressés dans l'affaire et s'est engagé à indemniser les autres moulins qui pourraient être arrêtés par suite de la dérivation des eaux d'Ain el Taseh sur Nabatié./.

Manual translation:

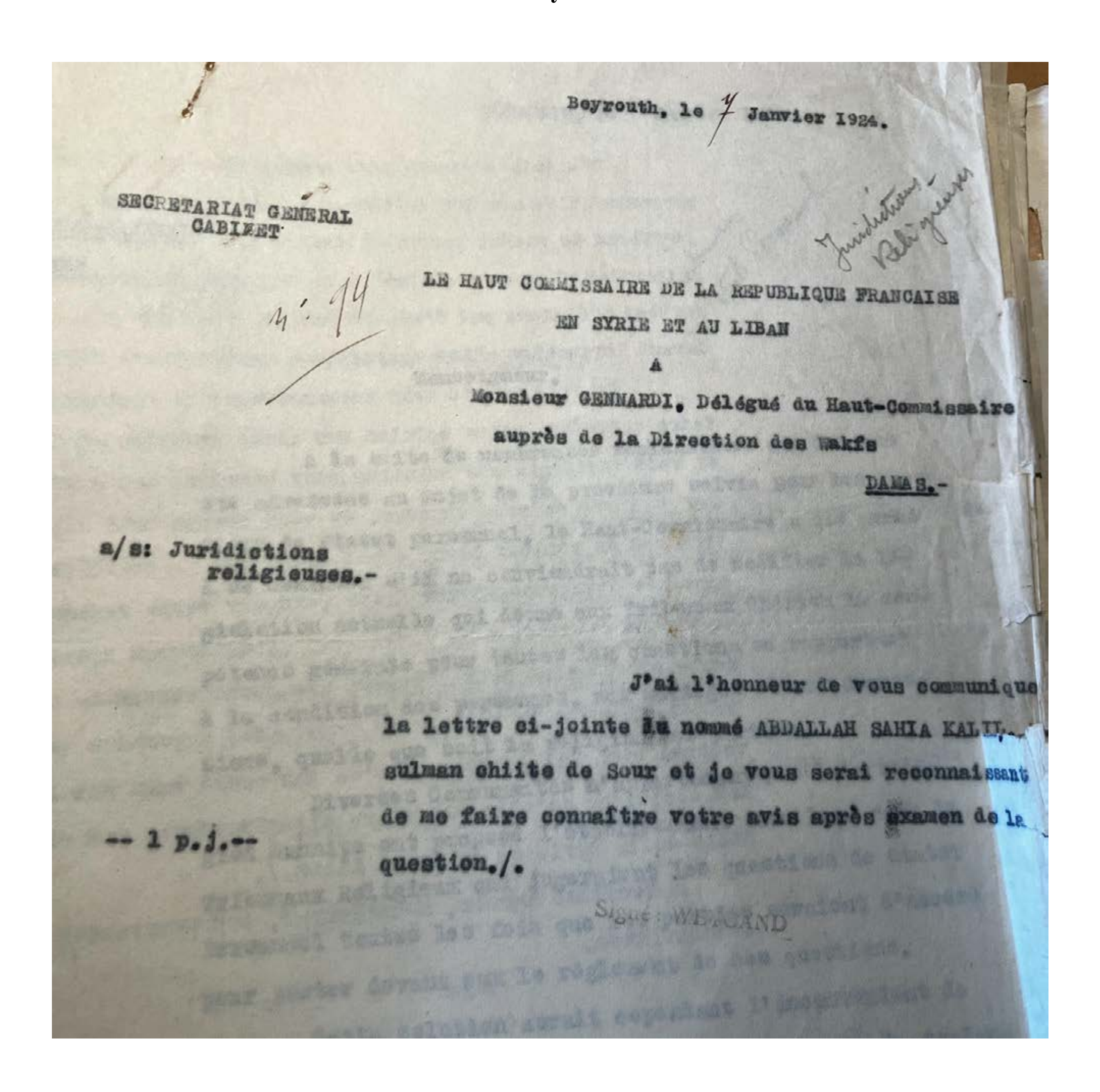
"Mr. Youssef Ismail Zein, from Saida, asked for the concession of the company that would consist in pumping the waters of the river of el Taseh [a ramification of the Litani river] in South Lebanon to ensure the distribution of potable water necessary to Nabatiyeh and its 4,000 inhabitants as well as to the neighboring villages, and the irrigation of surrounding fields.

The project seems interesting to turn Nabatiyeh into a small commercial center and the village of Kafar Ruman having no infrastructure for potable water distribution.

On the other hand, Mr. Zein, himself owner of three mills on Nahr el Taseh, is one of the first to express interest in this matter and the first to engage in compensating the other mills that might end up being affected negatively by the derivation of water towards Nabatiyeh."

[270] Ibid.

APPENDIX D (7 pages)
Telegram from General Weygand, High Commissioner of the Republic, to Mr. Gennardi, delegate of the High Commissioner vis-à-vis Waqf direction
7 January 1924[271]



Beyrouth, le 7 Janvier 1924.

SECRETARIAT GENERAL
CABINET

n° 14

Juridictions Religieuses

LE HAUT COMMISSAIRE DE LA REPUBLIQUE FRANCAISE
EN SYRIE ET AU LIBAN
A
Monsieur GENNARDI, Délégué du Haut-Commissaire
auprès de la Direction des Wakfs
DAMAS.-

a/s: Juridictions religieuses.-

J'ai l'honneur de vous communique[r] la lettre ci-jointe du nommé ABDALLAH SAHIA KALIL, [mu]sulman chiite de Sour et je vous serai reconnaissant de me faire connaître votre avis après examen de la question./.

-- 1 p.j.--

Signé : WEYGAND

271 MAE-Nantes, Carton #1541, "Je soussigné Adballah Iahya Kalil," January 6, 1924.

... 1924.

A son Excellence le Général Weygand
Haut Commissaire de la République Française
En Syrie et au Liban
Beyrouth.

Excellence

Je soussigné Abdallah Sahia Kalil, Musulman Chiite de Sour ai l'honneur de porter à votre Haute connaissance ce qui suit :

Il est de notoriété publique, depuis un temps immémorial, que les chefs confessionels jugent les différents découlant de l'état personnel qui peuvent avoir lieu entre leurs sujets : Mariage, séparation des corps, divorce, pension etc etc.
Il se fit ainsi jusqu'au jour de la promulgation par la

...mettre à la Commission chargée d'étudier diverses questions relatives aux juridictions religieuses
A.M.

copie de ceci a envoyer à Gennardi pour avis

À transmettre à la Commi[ssion] les diverses questions relatives

Je soussigné Abdallah Sahia Kalil, Musulman Chéite de Sour ai l'honneur de porter à votre Haute connaissance ce qui suit :

Il est de notoriété publique, depuis un temps immémorial que les chefs confessionels jugent les différents découlant de l'état personnel qui peuvent avoir lieu entre leurs siens : Mariage, séparation des corps, divorce, pension etc etc. Il se fit ainsi jusqu'au jour de la promulgation par la Turquie de la loi sur les familles. Aux termes de l'art. 156 de la dite loi, la dite juridiction avait été enlevée [?] aux chefs Confessionnels. Avec cette abrogation, il n'y a jamais eu soumission à la dite loi ; le Gouvernement Turc d'ailleurs n'en a pas maintenu l'exécution avec vigueur, d'un autre côté les Chefs Confessionnels de toutes les communautés ont énergiquement protesté contre cette loi pour les motifs suivants :

1/ Elle porte en plusieurs endroits sinon en tout une apostasie contre les principes religieux.

2/ Il y a aussi une contradiction flagrante des communs usages ayant déjà force de loi depuis la conquête musulmane.

(2)

...ur le Gouverneur du Grand Liban, dans l'Arrêté du ...
...cembre 1922 N° 175 avait abrogé le contenu de l'art 156 de la dite loi. Le Gouvernement Turc, ayant bien avant l'Arrêté mentionné, vu aussi l'erreur que portait la loi en question l'avait complètement abrogée par un Iradé Impérial en date du 20 Ramadan 1337, inséré dans Takouim-Wakakeh N° 174 Folio 1444 (Bulletin Officiel du Gouvernement)

Aussi le Pacte du Mandat en date du 24 juillet dans le Paragraphe II de l'Article 6 garantit à toutes les Communautés leur statut personnel etc.

Considérant ce qui précède, les Chéites qui ont une confession mahométane bien différente des Sunnites revenaient dans les affaires dépendant de leur statut personnel aux juges Confessionnels de leur Communauté.

D'ailleurs ...

[illegible] 1337, inséré dans Takouim-Wakaieh [illegible] Rama-
(Bulletin Officiel du Gouvernement) N° 174 Folio 1444

Aussi le Pacte du Mandat en date du
24 juillet dans le Paragraphe II de l'Article 6 garantit à tou-
tes les Communautés leur statut personnel etc.

Considérant ce qui précède, les Chiites qui ont
une Confession mahométane bien différente des Sunnites revenaient
dans les affaires dépendant de leur statut personnel aux juges
Confessionnels de leur Communauté.

D'ailleurs pour ces motifs il a été procé-
dé à la nomination de deux Juges Chiites: l'un à Saida, l'au-
tre à Sour; d'autant plus que, de tout temps il y avait au
Liban un Juge Chiite Confessionnel et cela avait ~~bien~~ sa raison
d'être pour éviter le heurt que pourrait avoir lieu dans certaines
croyances et dans l'application de la loi Mahométane entre les Chiites
et les Sunnites; en d'autres termes l'application de la loi Ottomane au
point de vue du Statut personnel, entre Chiites et Sunnites ne peut
être la même car les Chiites, quoique musulmans ont une rite bien diffé-
rente de celles de Sunnites. Cela ressemble bien à ce qu'il y a entre
les Maronites et les Grecs Orthodoxes quoique les deux sont des Chrétiens.
Cependant chaque Communauté à son statut personnel bien
différent de l'autre c'est ainsi que cela existe entre les Chiites et les
Sunnites.

Considérant ce qui précède je me permets Excellence de soumettre le cas suivant :

Mon épouse Fariha née Bouji fille de Boufik Ramadan intenta une action contre moi par devant le Tribunal Chérié de Beyrouth, demandant la Séparation des corps et une pension. Il est bien entendu que la question de compétence a été soulevée ; car je ne puis admettre la juridiction de la loi Ottomane (Application Sunnite) étant donné que je suis Chiite et ayant un rite autre que celle des Sunnites ; M'obliger à accepter la Juridiction Confessionnelle des Sunnites C'est m'amener à apostasier ma foi.

En somme je ne puis admettre comme tous ceux de notre Communauté la juridiction Sunnite pour ce qui regarde notre Statut personnel.

Daignez Excellence communiquer les instructions nécessaires

Mon épouse Fariha née Benfi fille de Toufik Ramadan intenta une action contre moi par devant le Tribunal Chérié de Beyrouth, démandant la Séparation des corps et une pension. Il est bien entendu que la question de compétence a été soulevée; car je ne puis admettre la juridiction de la loi Ottomane (Application Sunnite) étant donné que je suis Chéite et ayant une rite autre que celle des Sunnites; M'obliger à accepter la juridiction Confessionnelle des Sunnites C'est m'amener à apostastier ma foi.

En comme je ne puis admettre comme tous ceux de notre Communauté la juridiction Sunnite pour ce qui regarde notre statut personnel.

Daignez Excellence communiquer les instructions nécessaires à qui de droit pour faire signifier aux Cadis Sunnites de renvoyer les actions de ce genre concernant les Chéites, aux Cadis Confessionnels de notre Communauté.

J'ai l'honneur d'être Excellence votre très humble et dévoué Serviteur

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